



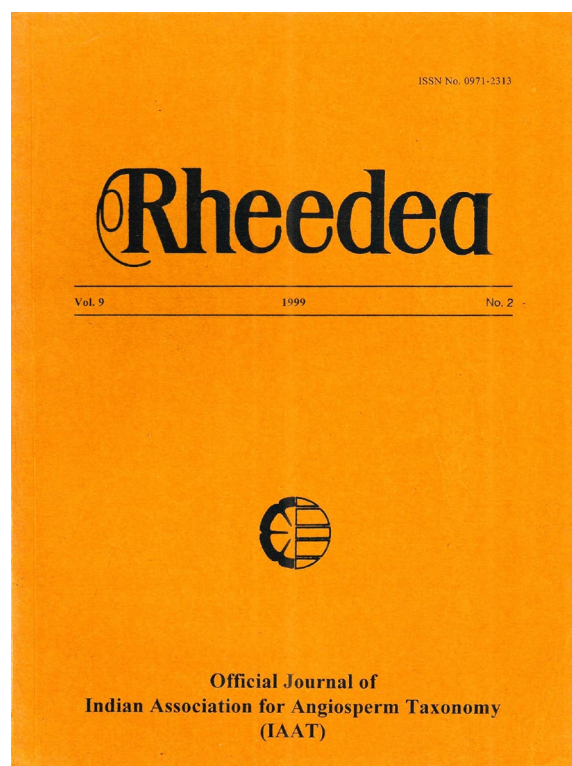
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A new species of *Amomum Roxb.* from Meghalaya, India¹

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Abstract

A new species, *Amomum garoensis* is described with illustrations from the Garo Hills of Meghalaya, India.

INTRODUCTION

The family Zingiberaceae is well known for its use in indigenous medicines, spices, dyes, condiments and ornamental flowers.

During the course of studies, the authors came across with several interesting findings. The present communication deals with a new species of *Amomum* Roxb. which is collected by one of us (ST) from Baghmara in Garo Hills of Meghalaya.

The genus *Amomum* Roxb. is the second largest genus of Zingiberaceae (next to *Alpinia* Roxb.), representing with about 150 species and distributing from the Himalayas to northern Australia. In India, it was representing so far by 16 species occurring mainly in north-eastern and peninsular region. The genus is characterised by radical cone-like inflorescence without an involucre of sterile bracts and elongate in fruiting (normally not embeded in the soil). Many flowers open at a time but borne singly in the axils of bracts; anthers with well developed crest and its filament does not join with lip to form the tube (as found in *Etilingera* Giseke). The plants often are tall upto 3-4 m high and grow in wet forest edges and gaps. The genus *Amomum* Roxb. is very close to *Hornstedtia* Retz. and *Etilingera* Giseke and the authors have re-defined their taxonomic characters with respect to Indian species.

***Amomum garoensis* Sunil & Ved Prakash sp. nov. (Fig. 1)**

A. maximo Roxb. affine in habitu generali, sed differt pedicellis largioribus, 2 cm, vel plus, labello rotundato, calyceque dense pubesenti, cum apicibus longe aristatis.

Typus : India : Meghalaya, Garo Hills; Baghmara Dt., Umphangiri, May 14, 1997 Sunil Tripathi 20834 (Holotypus, CDRI; Isotypus, CAL).

¹ CDRI Communication No. 5913

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This species is allied to *A. maximum* Roxb., in general habit, but it is distinct from the latter in having longer pedicel (2 cm), rounded labellum and densely pubescent calyx with aristate lobes. In *A. maximum* pedicel is very short (2-5 mm), labellum is obovate and calyx is glabrous to sparsely pubescent with acute lobes. Differences between *A. garoensis* and *A. maximum* are tabulated (Table 1).

Table 1. Differentiating characters between *Amomum maximum* and *A. garoensis*.

Character	<i>A. maximum</i> Roxb.	<i>A. garoensis</i> sp. nov.
Leafy shoot	1.5 - 2.0 m slender-robust	1-1.5 m slender
Ligule	2 cm long, bifid, hairy at base	1 cm long, entire, glabrous
Peduncle	4-6 cm long, 13 cm in infructescence	2 cm long, 9 cm in infructescence
Pedicel	2-5 mm long	2 cm long
Calyx	2-3 cm long, lobes mucronate, glabrous	3.5 cm long, lobes aristate, 1 cm long, densely pubescent
Labellum	Elliptic-obovate	rounded

A rhizomatous perennial herb upto 1.5 m tall; rhizomes creeping, thick, reddish outside, whitish inside, 20-65 cm long, 3-5 cm thick, fibrous in middle, less aromatic. Leafy stem erect, greenish, rounded with 7-11 leaves. Leaves petiolate; petiole upto 4 cm long; ligule 1.0 cm long, membranous, glabrous; lamina oblong-lanceolate, apex shortly acuminate, base attenuate, 65-150 x 8-15 cm, bright green, glabrous above, villous beneath, margins entire. Inflorescence radical, subterranean, spike congested 1-3 together, around, each stem, subglobose, 3-8 cm broad; peduncle short 4 cm long, infructescence 9 cm long. Bract disintegrating 4.3 x 2.0 cm, pinkish to brown, open at the base, obovate, glabrous. Bracteole deciduous. Flowers white on pedicel upto 2 cm long, one per bract 7 cm long, 2-4 open at one time per cluster. Calyx tubular 3.5 cm long, densely pubescent, 3-lobed, lobes aristate; arista 1 cm long, hairy. Corolla-tube shorter than the calyx (2.2 cm long), glabrous, shortly curved; lobes oblong, obtuse, yellowish 3.5 x 1.0 cm, membranous, dorsal lobe slightly wider than the laterals. Labellum white, rounded, 2.4 x 1.8 cm with yellow variegated hairy median band, tip rounded, margins crumpled. Lateral staminodes subulate, 2 mm long. Stamen one, 2.2 cm long, subsessile; filament 3 mm long; anther thecae 1.6

Amomum garoensis

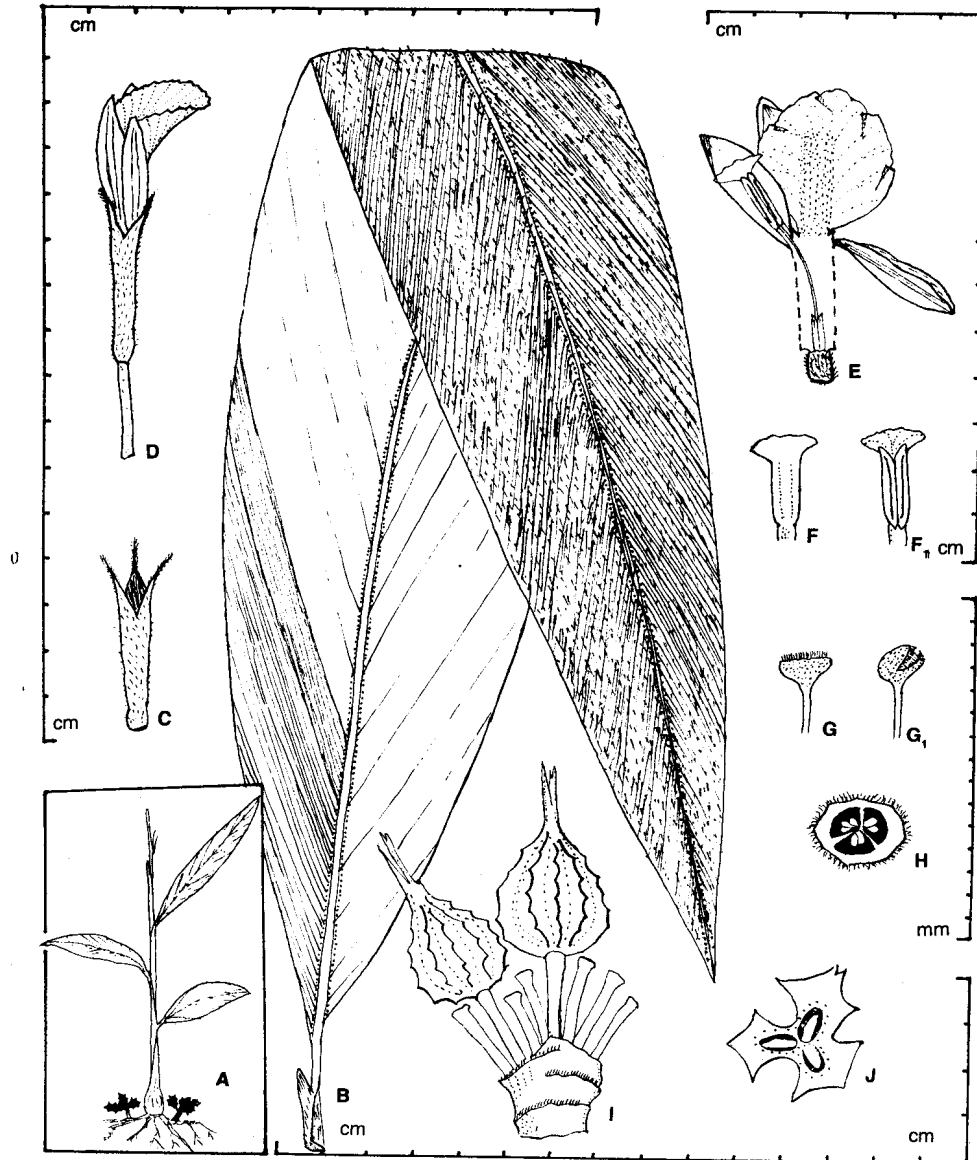


Fig. 1 *Amomum garoensis* Sunil & Ved Prakash : A. Habit; B. Leaf; C. Calyx; D. Flower; E. Corolla tube dissected; F. Stamen, back view; F₁. Stamen, front view; G. Stigma, outer view; G₁. Stigma, side view; H. Ovary in T.S.; I. Fruit with peduncle; J. T.S. of Fruit (Sunil Tripathi 20834).

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cm long, parallel, yellow, glabrous; crest truncate 3 mm high, 8 mm broad. Epigynous glands two, free from each other, 1.0 cm long, yellow, shortly curved. Ovary 0.8 cm long, densely pubescent, trilocular, with axile placenta; style filiform, 3 cm long; stigma capitate, opening hairy, red blotched. Fruit subglobose, 2-3 cm long, 2-3 cm wide at base, 8-10 cernulate winged ribs, greenish when collected.

Fls. & Fruits : April-June

Ecology : Grows along forest margins at ca. 600m. altitude.

Use : Flowers used for ornamental purposes.

Vern. Name : Gong-Aga (Garo).

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