

Sonerila dongnathamensis (Melastomataceae) a new species from Thailand

SOMRAN SUDDEE¹, THAMARAT PHUTTHAI² & SUKID RUEANGRUEA¹

ABSTRACT. *Sonerila dongnathamensis*, a new species from the sandstone plateau in Pha Taem National Park, Ubon Ratchathani is described and illustrated.

KEY WORDS: *Sonerila*, new species, Melastomataceae, Thailand.

INTRODUCTION

This new beautiful herb was discovered during plant collecting trips to Dong Na Tham forest, Pha Taem National Park, Khong Chiam District, Ubon Ratchathani Province, in the eastern part of Thailand along the Mekong River, in October 2007 and October 2013. The plants were found growing in sandy soil in semi-shady places beside sandstone rocks in dry deciduous dipterocarp forest.

Sonerila Roxb. is a genus of terrestrial, or low epiphytic herbs, or semi-woody subshrubs, erect or creeping and rhizomatous, occasionally acaulescent, distributed in tropical Asia (Renner et al., 2001). A treatment for Thailand was published by Renner et al. (2001), in which 13 species were recognized. The new *Sonerila* species described and illustrated here appears to be most closely related to *Sonerila primuloides* C.Y.Wu from S China (Chen & Renner, 2001), but does not match any of the known species.

DESCRIPTION

***Sonerila dongnathamensis* Suddee, Phutthai & Rueangruea sp. nov.**

Similar to *Sonerilla primuloides* in having leaves arranged in a basal rosette, but differs in

having the inflorescence peduncle densely villous instead of glabrous and the calyx lobes and petals with a seta at the apex. Type: Thailand. Ubon Ratchathani Province, Khong Chiam District, Pha Taem National Park, Dong Na Tham forest: 180 m alt., 18 Oct. 2007, *Suddee, Phutthai, Hemrat & Ritthiphet 3391* (holotype **BKF**; isotypes **BKF**). Fig. 1 & 2.

An acaulescent herb with globose tubers, 5–10 cm tall. *Leaves* forming a basal rosette, ovate to rounded, 2–7 by 2.5–6 cm, apex rounded, base deeply cordate, margin finely crenate and long ciliate, lamina membranous, dull to sub-glossy green, with scattered white bristle hairs above; pink, with white hairs, especially along veins, below; with 2–4 pairs of lateral primary veins departing from base; petiole white to pinkish-green, 5–15 cm long, densely villous. *Inflorescence* a terminal 5–12-flowered scorpioid cyme; peduncle 4–16 cm long, densely villous. *Hypanthium* green to pinkish-green, campanulate-oblong, 1.5–4 mm long, glabrous, calyx lobes triangular-ovate, each with a long seta at apex; pedicels 1–4 mm long, glabrous. *Petals* elliptic to ovate-elliptic, 3–5 mm long, pinkish-purple, each with a long seta at apex. *Stamens* 3, anthers bright yellow, 5–5.5 mm long, basally deep cordate. *Capsule* campanulate-oblong, 5–7 mm long, smooth.

¹ The Forest Herbarium (BKF), Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, Chatuchack, Bangkok 10900, Thailand. Email: somrans@hotmail.com

² Mahidol University, Kanchanaburi Campus, Kanchanaburi 71150, Thailand.

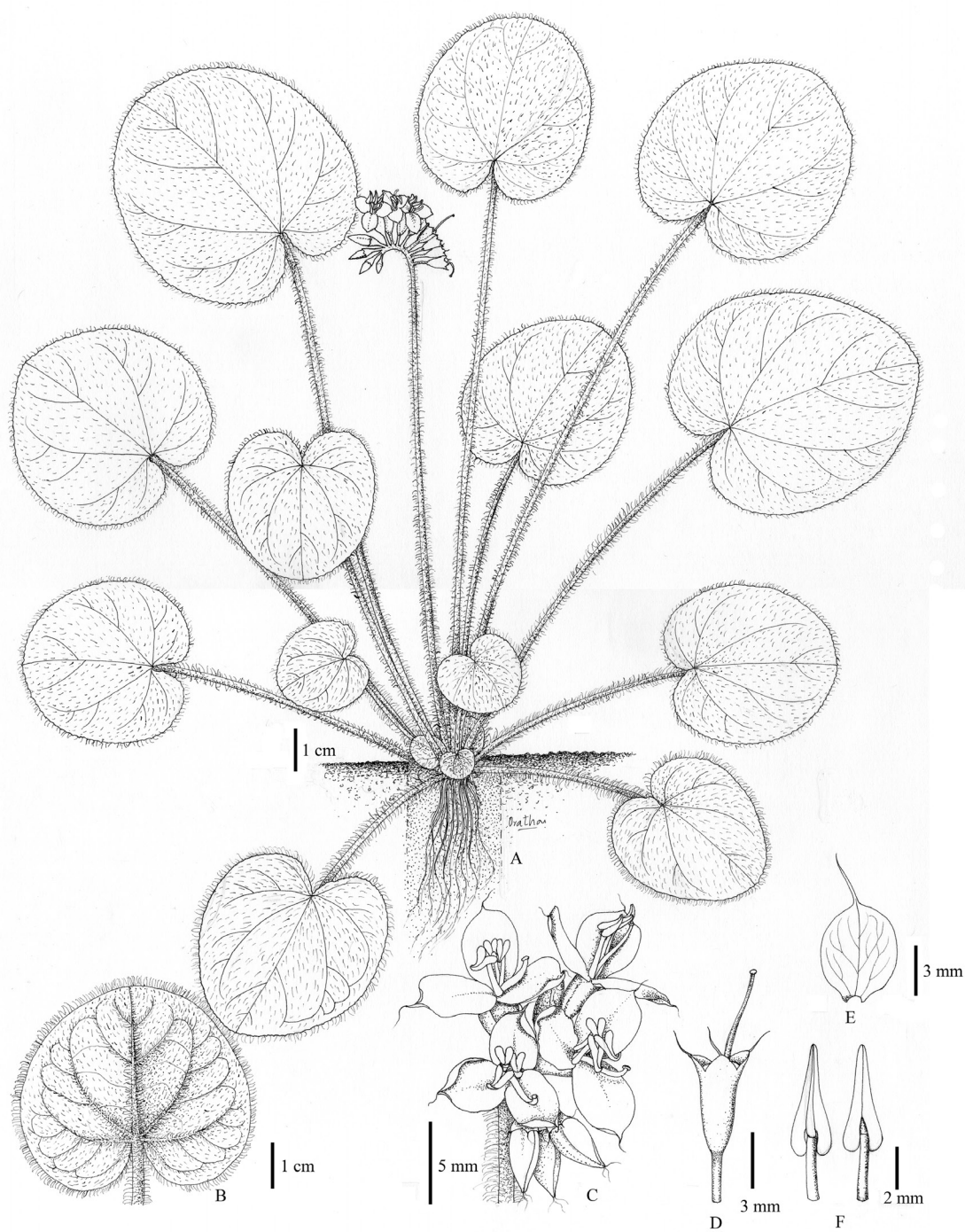


Figure 1. *Sonerila dongnathamensis* Suddee, Phutthai & Rueangruea, A. Habit; B. Leaf undersurface; C. Flowers; D. Flower hypanthium; E. Petal; F. Stamens. All from Suddee et al. 3391 (BKF); Drawn by O. Kerdkaew.



Figure 2. *Sonerila dongnathamensis* Suddee, Phutthai & Rueangruea, A–C. Habit; D. Leaves upper surface; E. Leaves under surface; F. Flowers. A–C., F. by T. Phutthai; D–E. by S. Rueangruea.

Thailand.— EASTERN: Ubon Ratchathani [Khong Chiam District, Pha Taem National Park, Dong Na Tham forest, 180 m alt., 18 Oct. 2007, *Suddee, Phutthai, Hemrat & Ritthiphet 3391 (BKF)*; *ibid*, 265 m alt., 12 Oct. 2013, *Suddee, Puudjaa, Rueangruea, Kiewbang, Hemrat & Pansamrong 4609 (BKF)*].

Distribution.— Endemic (known only from the specimens cited).

Phenology.— Flowering: October.

Ecology.— Dry deciduous dipterocarp forest on sandstone plateau; 180–270 m elev.

Vernacular.— Sao sanom dong na tham (สาอสนมดงนาทาม)

Etymology.— The epithet ‘*dongnathamensis*’ refers to the collecting locality.

Conservation.— DD (Data Deficient). More exploration is needed in order to gain more information for conservation assessment.

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