

***Sonerila dongnathamensis* (Melastomataceae) a new species from Thailand**

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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 & Ritthipheth 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.

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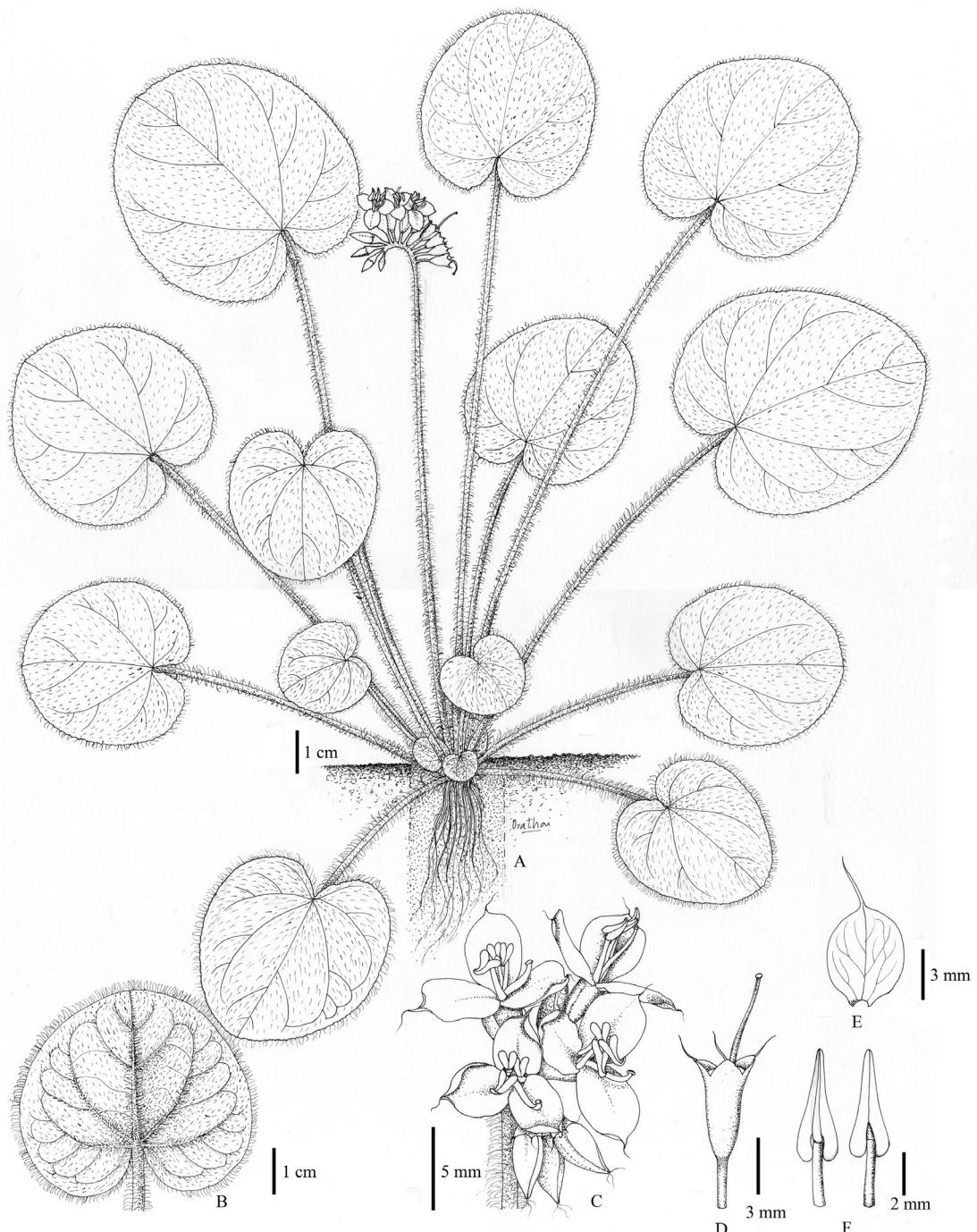


Figure 1. *Sonerila dongnathamensis* Suddee, Phutthai & Rueangruea, A. Habit; B. Leaf undersurface; C. Flowers; D. Flower panthium; E. Petal; F. Stamens. All from Suddee et al. 3391 (BKF); Drawn by O. Kerdkaew.



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 (ສາວ ສນມດຈນາທານ)

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.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Pachok Puudjaa, Chandee Hemrat, Wittawat Kiewbang, Nikhom Ritthiphet and Pongsiri Pansamrong for their assistances in the field. Orathai Kerdkaew is thanked for the beautiful line drawings, and Bob Harwood for comments. Nicoletta Cellinese is also thanked for editing manuscript and for useful suggestions.

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