

Porpax thaithongiae (Orchidaceae) a new species from Thailand

SOMRAN SUDDEE¹, PHATTARAVEE PROMMANUT² & SANTI WATTHANA³

ABSTRACT. *Porpax thaithongiae*, a new species from the degraded limestone hills in Umphang District, Tak Province in the western part of Thailand is described and illustrated.

KEY WORDS: *Porpax*, new species, Orchidaceae, Thailand.

INTRODUCTION

Sterile plants of this new attractive epiphytic orchid were discovered during a plant collecting trip to Doi Hua Mot, Umphang District, Tak Province, in the western part of Thailand more than 10 years ago, but the first flowering material was only found during a plant collecting trip in April 2013. The plants were found mostly on tree trunks in degraded limestone hills in dry deciduous dipterocarp forest where forest fire occurs nearly every year. The area also has a high rate of erosion because of trekkers and over grazing by cattle. This new taxon belongs to the genus *Porpax* Lindl. but does not match any of the known species in *Porpax*, and so is described and illustrated here.

Porpax Lindl. is a genus of epiphytes, distributed mainly in tropical regions of Asia, from the Himalayas to India, Nepal, Bhutan, S China, Laos, Thailand, peninsular Malaysia and Sabah (Pridgeon et al., 2005). An overall treatment was done by Seidenfaden (1986), in which 11 species were recognized with 7 species from Thailand; *P. elwesii*, *P. gigantea*, *P. grandiflora*, *P. lanii*, *P. parishii*, *P. scaposa* and *P. ustulata*. Seidenfaden (1992) reported 3 species in Indochina; *P. elwesii*, *P. fibuliformis* and *P. reticulata*. Seidenfaden & Wood (1992) reported one species, *P. elwesii* for Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore. Sitthisajjadharn

and Tripetch (2009) reported another species, *P. meirax*, from the western part of Thailand.

DESCRIPTION

***Porpax thaithongiae* Suddee, Prommanut & Watthana sp. nov.**

Closely related to *Porpax lanii* in having all sepals connate nearly to the apex, but differs in having the sepal tube wide open and glabrous; labellum ovate, distinctly 3-nerved; petals ovate, 3-nerved, finely rugose at apex, broadly clawed at base. Also closely related to *Porpax elwesii* in having all sepals glabrous and connate nearly to the apex, but differs in having inflorescence appearing from the base of pseudobulb instead of from the apex. Type: Thailand. Tak Province, Umphang District, Doi Hua Mot: 879 m alt., 13 April 2013, Suddee, Rueangruea, Prommanut & Pansamrong 4433 (holotype **BKF**). Fig. 1 & 2.

Plant epiphytic, clump-forming on the substrate, 2.5–5 cm tall. *Pseudobulbs* flattened triangular to globose, 0.8–1.6 cm in diam., covered by a sheath which disintegrate into a fibrous reticulate network. *Foliage leaves* 2 per pseudobulb, often appearing after the flower, elliptic to oblong, 0.8–3.5 by 0.6–1.2 cm, apex acute, base tapering to a

¹ The Forest Herbarium (BKF), Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, Chatuchak, Bangkok 10900, Thailand.

² Bangkok Herbarium (BK), Department of Agriculture, Bangkok 10900, Thailand

³ Queen Sirikit Botanic Garden (QBG), The Botanical Garden Organization, Chiang Mai 50180, Thailand

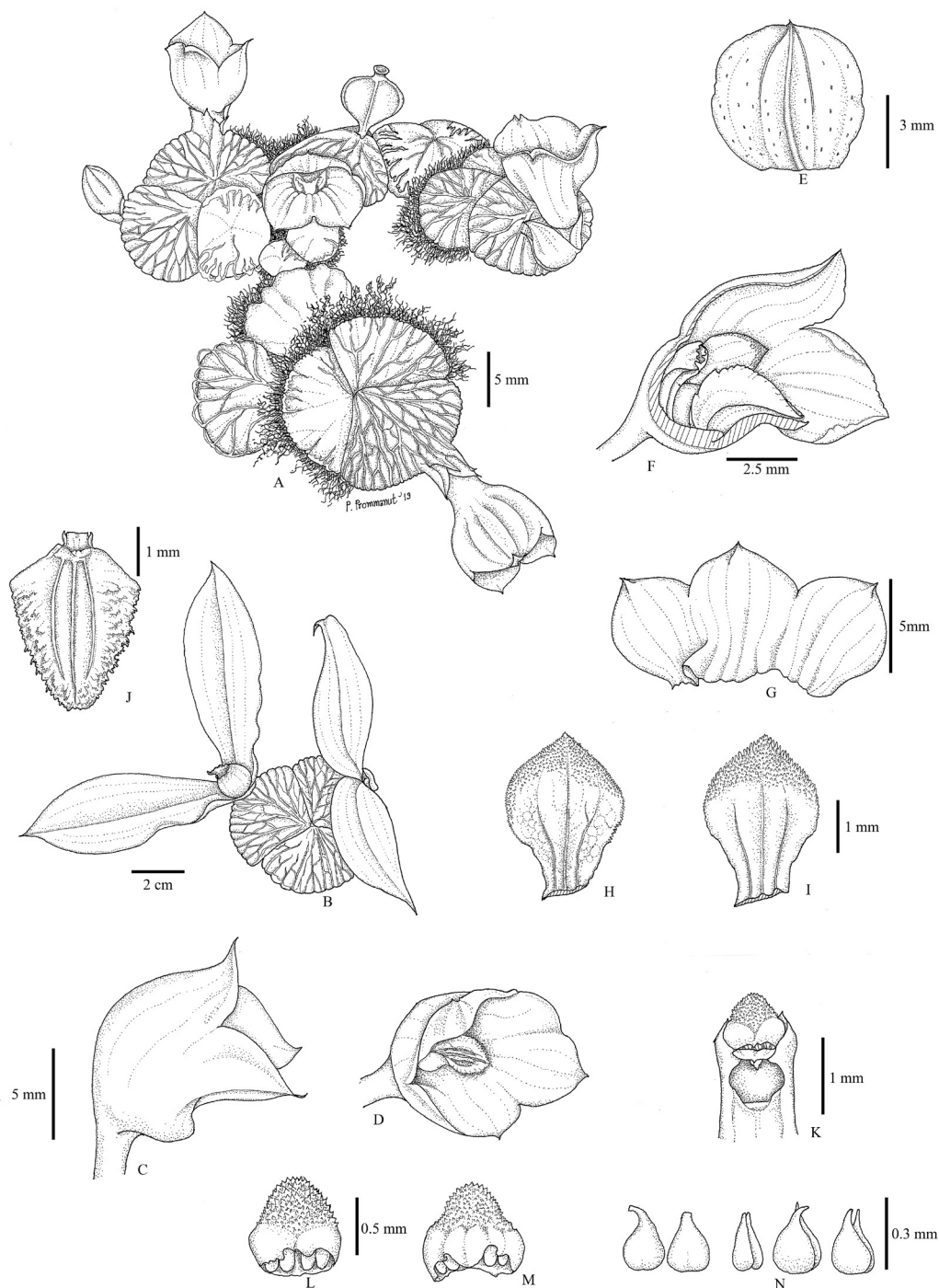


Figure 1. *Porpax thaithongiae* Suddee, Prommanut & Watthana, A. Plants in flower with a fruit from the previous year; B. Plants in fruit; C. Flower side view; D. Flower front view; E. Bract abaxial surface; F. Dissected flower longitudinal section; G. Sepals abaxial surface; H. Petal abaxial surface; I. Petal adaxial surface; J. Labellum; K. Column; L. Operculum from above; M. Operculum from below; N. Pollinia. A, C–N from Suddee *et al.* 4433 (BKF); B from Prommanut 307 (BKF). All drawn by P. Prommanut.



Figure 2. *Porpax thaithongiae* Suddee, Prommanut & Watthana, A–E. Plants in flower; F. Plants in fruit. A by S. Rueangruea; B–F by P. Prommanut.

petiole, lamina dull green, with faint longitudinal lines; petiole 2–3 mm long. *Inflorescence* short, arising from base of pseudobulb, 1-flowered; peduncle very short; floral bracts conspicuous, ovate to rounded, 3–6.5 by 2–5 mm, apex acute, covering ovary. *Flower* 0.8–1 cm long, dull red, occasionally yellow; pedicel and ovary short. *Sepals* connate into a subcampanulate tube, wide open, usually with several shallow keels outside, glabrous, gibbous at base; lobes broadly ovate, apiculate at apex. *Petals* ovate, 2.5–3 by 1.8–2.5 mm, 3-nerved, apex acute and finely rugose, broadly clawed at base. *Labellum* simple, ovate, 2.8–3.5 by 2–2.5 mm, recurved, distinctly 3-nerved, warty and shortly lacinate along margins; disk ornamented by irregular calli. *Column* 1.5–2 mm long, foot long; rostellum large, truncate; operculum tuberculate; pollinia 8, in 2 groups of 4, laterally compressed. *Capsule* subglobose, 6–7 mm in diam., with 3 longitudinal ridges.

Thailand.— NORTHERN: Tak [Umphang District, Umphang Wildlife Sanctuary, Doi Hua Mot, 879 m alt., 13 April 2013, *Suddee, Rueangruea, Prommanut & Pansamrong 4433 (BKF)*; *ibid*, 3 July 2013, *Prommanut 307 (BKF)*].

Distribution.— Endemic (known only from the type locality).

Phenology.— Flowering: April–May.

Ecology.— Dry deciduous dipterocarp forest on degraded limestone hills; 800–900 m alt.

Vernacular.— Ueang rangnok thai thong (เอื้องรังนกไทยทอง).

Etymology.— *Porpax thaithongiae* is named in honour of Assoc. Prof. Dr Obchant Thaithong of the Department of Botany, Chulalongkorn University, who has long contributed to Thai orchids study.

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

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