

Iresine (Amaranthaceae) – A Genus New to Thailand

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In the revision of the Amaranthaceae for Flora of Thailand (Larsen, 1992) 14 genera were recognised. In none of the herbaria consulted during this work, material of the genus *Iresine* was found. In the whole Indochinese region (Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam) only one specimen has been registered, a quite recent collection from the Vientiane area (Larsen, 1989). During field work in November 1993 in the Chiang Mai district, the Huai Kaeo Arboretum was used as base for drying specimens. Here the author observed *Iresine diffusa* growing as a weed in shady places. Furthermore *I. herbstii* has been found naturalised at Chiang Dao.

The following amendment and addition should be made to the treatment of the Amaranthaceae in Flora of Thailand Vol. 5.

On page 376: the key should be altered as follows:

- 9. Inflorescences richly branched panicles or spherical or ovoid heads, if elongate in age, then lower flowers dropping off, long before apical flowers are fully developed; anthers 2-loculed (after opening apparently 1-loculed)
 - 14 A. Inflorescences richly branched panicles of minute flowers from the upper leaf axils and terminal on the shoots
 - 14 A. Inflorescences spherical or ovoid heads
 - 14. as before
 - 14. as before
- 15. *Iresine***

On page 409 after the treatment of *Gomphrena celosioides* Mart. the following should be added:

15. IRESINE

P. Browne, Civ. Nat. Hist. Jamaica: 358. 1756. nom. cons.; Schinz, Pflanzenfam. ed. 2, 16c: 77. 1934; Backer, Fl. Mal. I. 4: 97. 1949; Larsen, Fl. C.L.V. 24: 55. 1989.

Erect, ascending or scrambling herbs or low shrubs. *Leaves* opposite, petiolate, entire, often somewhat succulent. *Inflorescences* in panicles consisting of pseudospikes. *Flowers* minute, solitary, uni- or bisexual, subtended by minute bracts; bracteoles membranous also minute. *Tepals* 5. *Filaments* 5, basically united in a low cup; pseudo-staminodes minute or absent. *Ovary* compressed; style short; stigma deeply 2- or 3-fid. *Fruit* a compressed, indehiscent utricle. *Seeds* lenticular or reniform.

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About 80 species particularly distributed in tropical to temperate America and Australia. One species commonly cultivated and naturalized in trop. Asia. In Thailand 2 species.

KEY TO THE SPECIES

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| 1. Leaves thin, attenuate, green | 1. <i>I. diffusa</i> |
| 1. Leaves $\pm$ succulent, emarginate, deep red with yellowish-green bands along the veins | 2. <i>I. herbstii</i> |

1. *Iresine diffusa* Humb. & Bonpl. ex Willd., Sp. Pl. ed. 4.4: 765. 1806.— *Celosia paniculata* Linn., Sp. Pl.: 206. 1753.— *Iresine celosia* Linn., Syst. ed. 10: 1291. 1759.— *I. celosioides* Linn., Sp. Pl. ed. 2: 1465. 1763, *nom. illeg.*— *I. paniculata* (Linn.) Ktze., Rev. Gen. 2: 542. 1891. Figure 32: a-c.

Annual or perennial herb; stem erect, ascending or scrambling up to 2 m, sometimes more, glabrous or nearly so. *Leaves* green, ovate, ovate-lanceolate or lanceolate (the upper ones), 1–14 by 0.5–7 cm, base broadly cuneate to truncate, apex acute or acuminate; petiole glabrous, 1–6 cm. *Inflorescences* lax, panicles from the upper leaf axils. *Flowers* 1–2 mm, dioecious, greenish-white, fragrant. *Tepals* 1–1.5 mm, twice as long as bracts; male perianth glabrous; female flowers with white hairs at the base of the tepals and on the pedicels. *Utricle* shorter than perianth. *Seeds* red, shining.

Thailand.— NORTHERN: Chiang Mai.

Distribution.— Widely distributed in tropical America (type, C. America). Not previously reported in any other SE.Asian flora known to the author.

Ecology.— Weedy, up to ca 2000 m in America.

Material studied.— Larsen et al. 45008. Chiang Mai, Huai Kaeo Arboretum, weed in shady places. 29. 11. 1993 (AAU, BKF).

2. *Iresine herbstii* Hook. f., Gard. Chron. 654. 1865; Bot. Mag. 91: tab. 5499. 1865; Backer, Fl. Mal. I. 4: 97. 1949; K. Larsen in Fl. C.L.V. 24: 55. 1989. Figure 32: d.

Annual or perennial, erect, somewhat succulent herb up to 1 m high, thickened at the nodes. *Leaves* variegated, deep red with yellowish-green bands along the secondary veins, ovate-orbicular or obovate, 2–8 by 1–2 cm, base obtuse to truncate, apex rounded, emarginate, finely pubescent on both sides; petiole 1–4 cm. *Inflorescences* terminal and in the upper leaf-axils, 10–50 cm long; peduncles 1–4 cm. *Flowers* minute, numerous, subtended by persistent bracts, 1 mm or less. *Tepals* 1–1.5 mm, pubescent at base; pseudo-staminodes minute. *Ovary* compressed, orbicular, glabrous. *Utricle* shorter than perianth. *Seeds* red, shining.

Thailand.— NORTHERN: Chiang Mai (Chiang Dao).

Distribution.— Origin in S. America (type, Brazil). Widely cultivated and naturalized few places in the Malesian area and in Laos.

Uses.— Ornamental and medicinal.

Material studied.— Ubolcholaket s. n. Chiang Mai, Doi Chiang Dao. Dec. 1979.

LITERATURE

Larsen, K. 1989. Amaranthaceae in Fl. du Cambodge, du Laos et du Viêtnam 24: 8–56.
 — 1992. Amaranthaceae in Smitinand & Larsen (eds.), Fl. Thailand 5: 375–409.

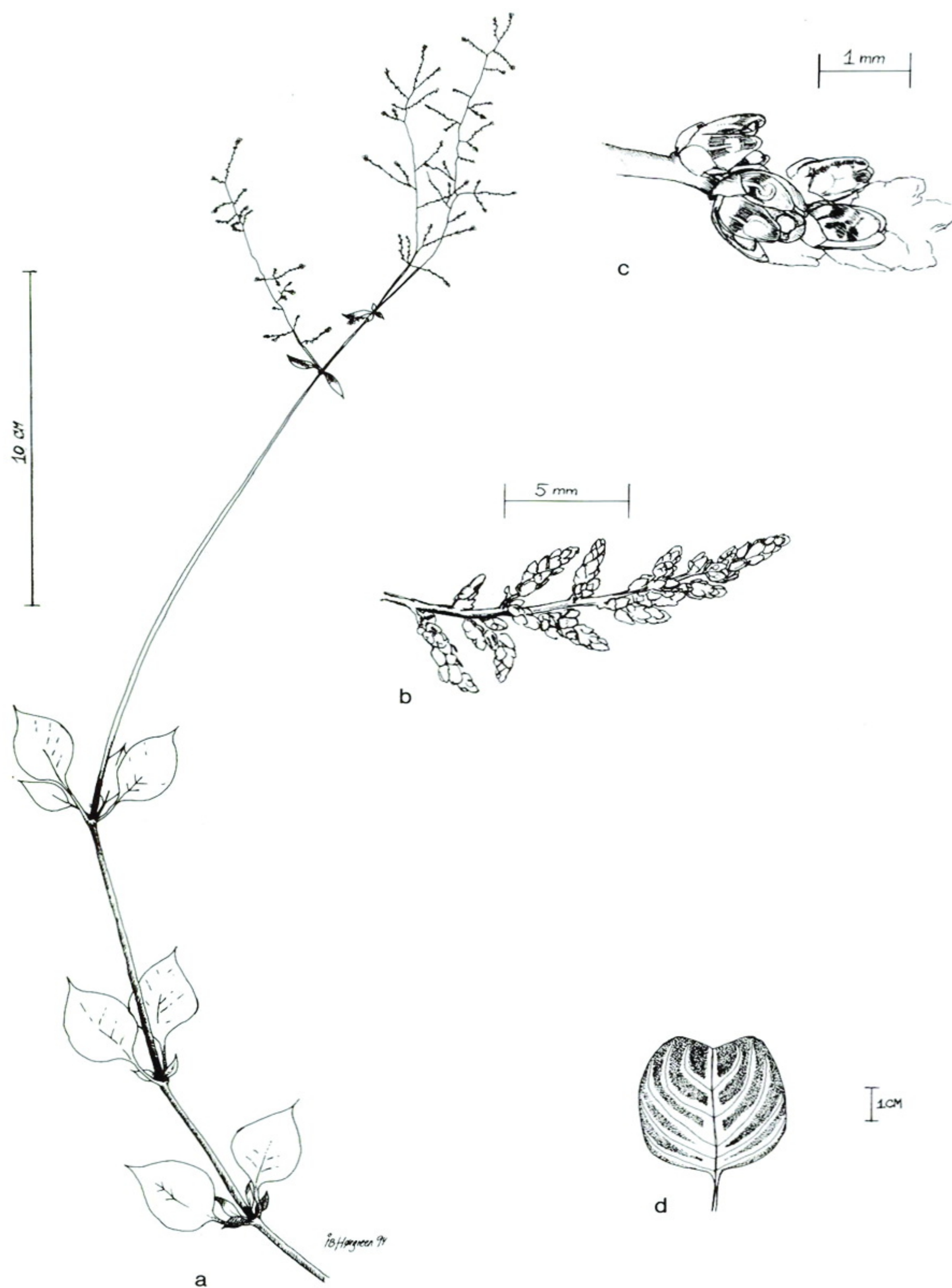


Figure 32. a–c. *Iresine diffusa* Humb. & Bonpl. ex Willd., a. flowering branch, b. apex of inflorescence with young flowers, c. part of spike; d. *Iresine herbstii* Hook.f., leaf.—Drawn by Ib Hörgreen.