

Notes on the genus *Thismia* (Thismiaceae) in Cambodia

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ABSTRACT

The genus *Thismia* in Bokor National Park, Cambodia has been studied based on literature and recent collections from field surveys. Three species are recorded including *T. bokorensis*, *T. filiformis*, and *T. gardneriana*, all belonging to sect. *Thismia*. A key to species of the genus *Thismia* in Cambodia, descriptions and photographs of *T. filiformis*, and *T. gardneriana* are provided. In addition, the preliminary conservation status was assessed following the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List criteria.

KEYWORDS: Bokor National Park, Indochina, mycoheterotrophic plant, subsect. *Brunonithismia*, subsect. *Odoardoa*.

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INTRODUCTION

The genus *Thismia* Griff. represents one of the most species-rich genera of fully mycoheterotrophic plants, comprising about 120 species (e.g. Besi *et al.*, 2024; Chung *et al.*, 2024; Lu *et al.*, 2024; Siti-Munirah *et al.*, 2024, 2025; Ya *et al.*, 2024; Dančák *et al.*, 2025; Siti-Munirah & Mohamad Alias, 2025). The genus is mainly distributed in tropical America and tropical Asia with the highest diversity in South-East Asia. Most *Thismia* species appear to be collected only once or a few times and are easily overlooked in the field, probably due to their small size with highly reduced vegetative morphology. Despite many new populations of *Thismia* being recently discovered in Borneo and mainland SE Asia (e.g. Chantanaorrapint, 2018; Sochor *et al.*, 2018; Dančák *et al.*, 2020; Phonepaseuth *et al.*, 2024; Siti-Munirah *et al.*, 2025), the genus is still rather poorly known in Cambodia. Only one species, *T. bokorensis* Suetsugu & Tsukaya, was reported from Bokor National Park (Suetsugu *et al.*, 2018; Nuraliev *et al.*, 2020).

Bokor National Park or Preah Monivong National Park is located in south-eastern Cambodia,

and represents a biodiversity hotspot with a rich plant diversity and a high level of endemism (Rundel & Middleton, 2017). In 2023 and 2024, the authors visited Bokor National Park, aiming to find fresh material of *T. bokorensis* for molecular study. Unfortunately, they could not find *T. bokorensis* because the type locality was destroyed by the fire. Luckily, two additional species of *Thismia* were found in Bokor National Park. Based on relevant literature, they were identified as *T. filiformis* Chantanaorr. (Chantanaorrapint, 2012) and *T. gardneriana* Hook.f. ex Thwaites, (Thwaites, 1864) which are new records for the country. These findings represent additions to the flora of Cambodia. Morphological descriptions based on the collected plants from Cambodia along with the photographs and notes on their ecology and distribution, are provided below.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Field surveys were carried out in Bokor National Park, Cambodia (Fig. 1) in July and September 2023, and August 2024. The specimens were photographed and deposited in Prince of

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Songkla University Herbarium (PSU) and the National Herbarium of Cambodia. Herbarium acronyms follow Index Herbariorum (Thiers, 2025). Morphological characters were studied using an Olympus SZX7 stereomicroscope, with additional photographs documenting the habitat and habits taken during field observations. The measurements and description were prepared from living plants and spirit material. Comparisons of diagnostic characters were based on Cambodian specimens, as well as herbarium specimens housed in BKF and PSU, and on relevant taxonomic literature (e.g. Jonker 1938, 1948; Chantanaorrapint, 2012; Suetsugu *et al.*, 2018; Nuraliev *et al.*, 2020). The preliminary conservation status was assessed following the IUCN guidelines (IUCN, 2012, 2024).

TAXONOMIC TREATMENT

1. *Thismia bokorensis* Suetsugu & Tsukaya, Phytotaxa 334: 65. 2018.— Type: Cambodia. Kampot Province, Bokor National Park, evergreen forest near a stream, 10°36'33.6"N, 104°04'12.6"E, elev. 370 m, 10 Aug. 2013, *Tagane, Fuse, Yokota, Zhang & Chhang* 5857 (holotype TNS).

Description.— see Suetsugu *et al.* (2018) and Nuraliev *et al.* (2020).

Habitat and ecology.— *Thismia bokorensis* was found in the evergreen forest near the stream at an elevation of approximately 370 m. The flowering specimen was collected in August (Suetsugu *et al.*, 2018).

Distribution.— Endemic to Cambodia (Fig. 1C). It is currently known only from the type locality; however, it may also occur in other areas in Cambodia and south-eastern Thailand with a similar vegetation type.

Conservation status.— So far, this species is known only from a single location (the type locality),

and only one mature individual was observed in 2013 (Suetsugu *et al.*, 2018). After revisiting the type locality in July–September 2023 and August 2024, we could not find any existing population, and the habitat has been destroyed by the fire. Due to its very restricted known distribution, the small area of occupancy (AOO) less than 10 km², and the presence of mature individuals numbering fewer than 20, therefore, we suggest evaluating the species as Critically Endangered (CR: B2ab(iii); C2a(i); D).

Notes.— The main features of *Thismia bokorensis* include the vermiform roots, the pure white floral tube with light yellow annulus and floral lobes, inner surface of floral tube without transverse bars, apex of each stamen connective bearing three narrowly triangular teeth, lateral appendage of the connective not exceeding the apical part of the connective, and the stigma lobes being shallowly bilobed. *Thismia bokorensis* resembles *T. tentaculata* K.Larsen & Aver. (Larsen & Averyanov, 2007) in having a pure white floral tube and inner surface of the floral tube without transverse bars. A detailed discussion about the differences between the two species has been given in Suetsugu *et al.* (2018). Some morphological characteristics of *T. bokorensis* need to re-examine, such as the inner surface of the floral tube and the stamen apex. Based on the original description (Suetsugu *et al.*, 2018), the inner surface of the floral tube lacks transverse bars. However, the transverse bars seem to be observed from outside of the floral tube (see Fig. 1B, Suetsugu *et al.*, 2018). Suetsugu *et al.* (2018) mention that the apex of each stamen connective has three narrowly triangular teeth, but it is not strongly tridentate. In addition, *T. bokorensis* is also similar to *T. breviappendiculata* Nop.Tanaka, an endemic species from Myanmar (Tanaka *et al.*, 2018) in general appearance, but the latter differs in having claviform appendages of inner floral lobes.

KEY TO THE SPECIES OF THE GENUS *THISMIA* IN BOKOR NATIONAL PARK, CAMBODIA

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. Floral lobes equal in shape and size, all bearing filiform appendages | 2. <i>T. filiformis</i> |
| 1. Floral lobes unequal in shape and size, the 3 outer lobes without filiform appendages, the inner ones bearing filiform appendages | |
| 2. Flowers yellowish-orange to reddish-orange. Stamen connective with 3 distinct teeth at apex; lateral appendage of connective almost equal in length to the connective. Stigma deeply 2-lobed | 3. <i>T. gardneriana</i> |
| 2. Flowers yellowish. Stamen connective with 3 indistinct teeth at apex; lateral appendage of connective not exceeding apical part of the connective. Stigma shallowly 2-lobed | 1. <i>T. bokorensis</i> |

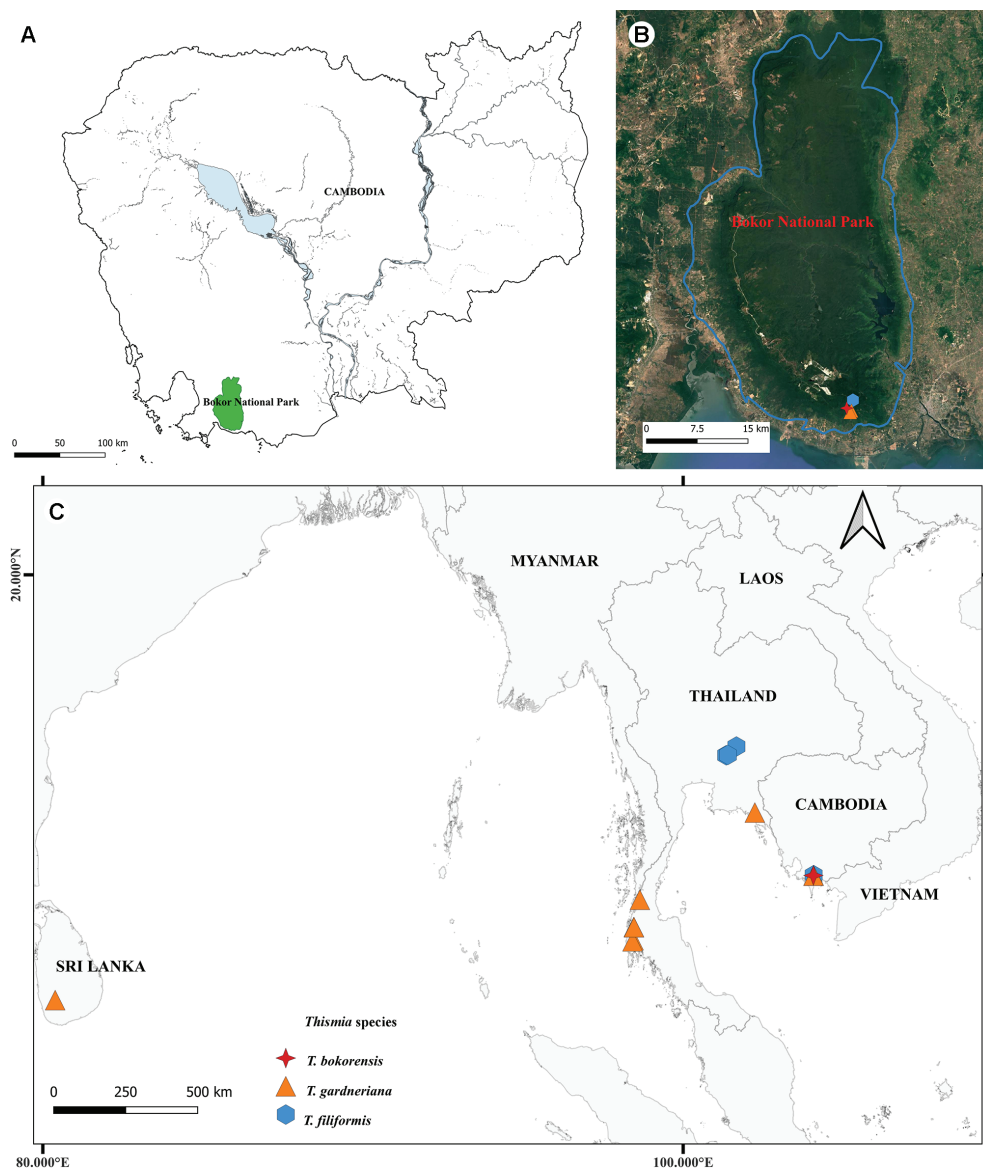


Figure 1. A–B. Kingdom of Cambodia showing location of Bokor National Park; C. Geographical distribution of *Thismia bokorensis* Suetsugu & Tsukaya, *T. filiformis* Chantanaorr., and *T. gardneriana* Hook. f. ex Thwaites. All were prepared by S. Kin.

2. *Thismia filiformis* Chantanaorr., Kew Bull., 67: 69. 2012.— Type: Thailand. Prachinburi Province, Khao Khiao Mt, Khao Yai National Park, 800 m, 14°37'80"N, 101°39'55"E, 20 Aug. 2010, *Chantana-orrarpint* 2286 (holotype **PSU!**; isotype **BKF!**). Fig. 2.

Terrestrial, achlorophyllous herbs. Roots creeping, vermiform, branched, brownish-white tip, to 1 mm diam. *Stem* erect, simple, whitish to 3.7–5

cm tall (including flowers), 1.2–1.4 mm diam., glabrous, terete. *Leaves* scale-like, lanceolate, 3.1–4 × 1.4–1.5 mm, apex acute. *Inflorescence* racemose, 1–3 flowers. *Floral bracts* 3, white, similar to upper leaves. *Flowers* actinomorphic. *Floral tube* campanulate, 4–5 mm long, pale brown to whitish, narrowed just above the ovary, widest at the upper third, with 12 bright-brownish vertical streaks in the upper part; outer surface papillose or with minute

glands; inner surface without transverse bars. *Floral lobes* 6, yellowish-brown, triangular, arranged in one whorl, equal in shape and size, $4\text{--}5 \times 2.4\text{--}2.6$ mm at base; continue with orange-brown filiform appendages, 4.5–5 mm long. *Annulus* prominent, fleshy, yellowish-brown, hexagonal, ca 4 mm diam., central pore 1.5–1.8 mm diam. *Stamens* 6, colourless, pendant below mouth of annulus; filaments short, free, whitish, glabrous, ca 0.84 mm long, ca 0.66 mm wide; connectives broad and flattened, laterally connate to form a tube, ca 0.9 mm long; lateral appendage skirt-like, protruding towards floral tube, not reaching the apex of the connective, shallowly dentate and sparsely hairy on free margins; apex of each connective (supraconnective) 3-toothed (the middle shortest, ca 1 : 3), bright whitish; individual stamens with 2 thecae, each theca oblong, ca 0.60 mm long; interstaminal glands present, rounded, placed between bases of lateral appendages. *Ovary* obconical, ca 2.5 mm long, with papillose longitudinal ridges, placentas 3; style short, ca 0.8 mm; stigma 3-bilobed, 0.88–0.90 mm long, surface papillose; stigma lobes ovate-oblong, 2-lobed. *Fruit* fleshy, brownish, cup-shaped, 2–3 mm long, crowned by the persistent basal ring; fruit stalk thickened and lengthened after flowering to 2 cm. *Seeds* ovate to ellipsoid, $0.35\text{--}0.60 \times 0.25\text{--}0.28$ mm, yellowish-brown, seed coat reticulate.

Specimens examined.— CAMBODIA. Kampot Province [Bokor National Park, evergreen forest near a stream, ca 960 m, $10^{\circ}37'12''\text{N}$, $104^{\circ}4'43''\text{E}$, 10 Sept. 2023, *Kin 24* (PSU)]. THAILAND. Prachinburi Province [Khao Yai National Park, Khao Khiao Mt, 800 m, $14^{\circ}37'80''\text{N}$, $101^{\circ}39'55''\text{E}$, 12 May 2009, *Tripetch 23* (PSU); 13 June 2010, *Tripetch 100647* (PSU)].

Distribution.— Thailand (Khao Yai National Park) (Chantanaorrapint, 2012); Cambodia (Bokor National Park)(Fig. 1C).

Habitat and ecology.— In Cambodia, *Thismia filiformis* was found in lower mountain forest, near the stream at an elevation of approximately 960 m. Flowering and fruiting from June to September.

Conservation status.— So far, *Thismia filiformis* is currently known from three locations, which are in protected areas. One of the populations is located beside a camping area, which is a common visiting site for tourists. Therefore, habitat quality is threatened

by trampling and other destructive activities, potentially caused by regular visits by tourists to the area. Its area of occupancy (AOO) is estimated to be 12 km², which falls within the limits for Endangered status under criterion B2. We then assigned to *T. filiformis* a preliminary status of EN B2ab(iii).

Notes.— *Thismia filiformis* is morphologically closest to *T. grandiflora* Ridl., an endemic species of the Malay Peninsula (Ridley, 1895), which also has three filiform appendages at the apex of the connective and the length of the floral lobes as long as the filiform appendages. But *T. grandiflora* differs from *T. filiformis* in having rose-pink flowers, leaves bearing glandular hairs, and the middle appendage of the stamen connective much longer than the two lateral ones. *Thismia filiformis* also resembles *T. pallida* Hroneš *et al.* from Borneo (Hroneš *et al.*, 2018), but the latter differs by the presence of five appendages at the apex of the connective, the lateral appendage exceeding the apex of the connective, and the shorter filiform appendage of the floral lobe.

3. *Thismia gardneriana* Hook.f. ex Thwaites, Enum. Pl. Zeyl. [Thwaites] 325. 1864. Type: Sri Lanka (Ceylon). Narawella, near Galle, *Champion s.n.* (holotype **K!** [K000873454]). Fig. 3.

Terrestrial, achlorophyllous herbs. *Roots* vermiform, branched, brownish-white tip, to 2.5 mm diam. *Stem* erect, simple, to 18 cm tall (including flowers), 2–2.5 mm diam., glabrous, terete. *Leaves* scale-like, lanceolate, 7–9 mm long, transparent, apex acute or acuminate. *Inflorescence* racemose, (1–)2–5 flowers. *Floral bracts* 3, white, similar to upper leaves. *Flowers* actinomorphic. *Floral tube* campanulate, to 12 mm long, yellowish orange to reddish, narrowed just above the ovary, widest at the upper third, with 12 reddish vertical streaks in the upper part; outer surface papillose or with minute glands; inner surface with transverse bars. *Floral lobes* 6, arranged in two whorls, unequal in shape and size. *Outer lobes* 3, broadly ovate, 2.5–3.2 mm long, 4.5–5 mm wide at base, yellowish to orange. *Inner lobes* $\pm$ triangular, 4.5–5.5 mm long, yellow to orange at the base, terminated by orange or reddish thread-like appendages, appendage 20–32 mm long. *Annulus* prominent, yellowish to orange, hexagonal, 5–6.5 mm diam., central pore 3.5–4.0 mm diam. *Stamens* 6, pendent below mouth of

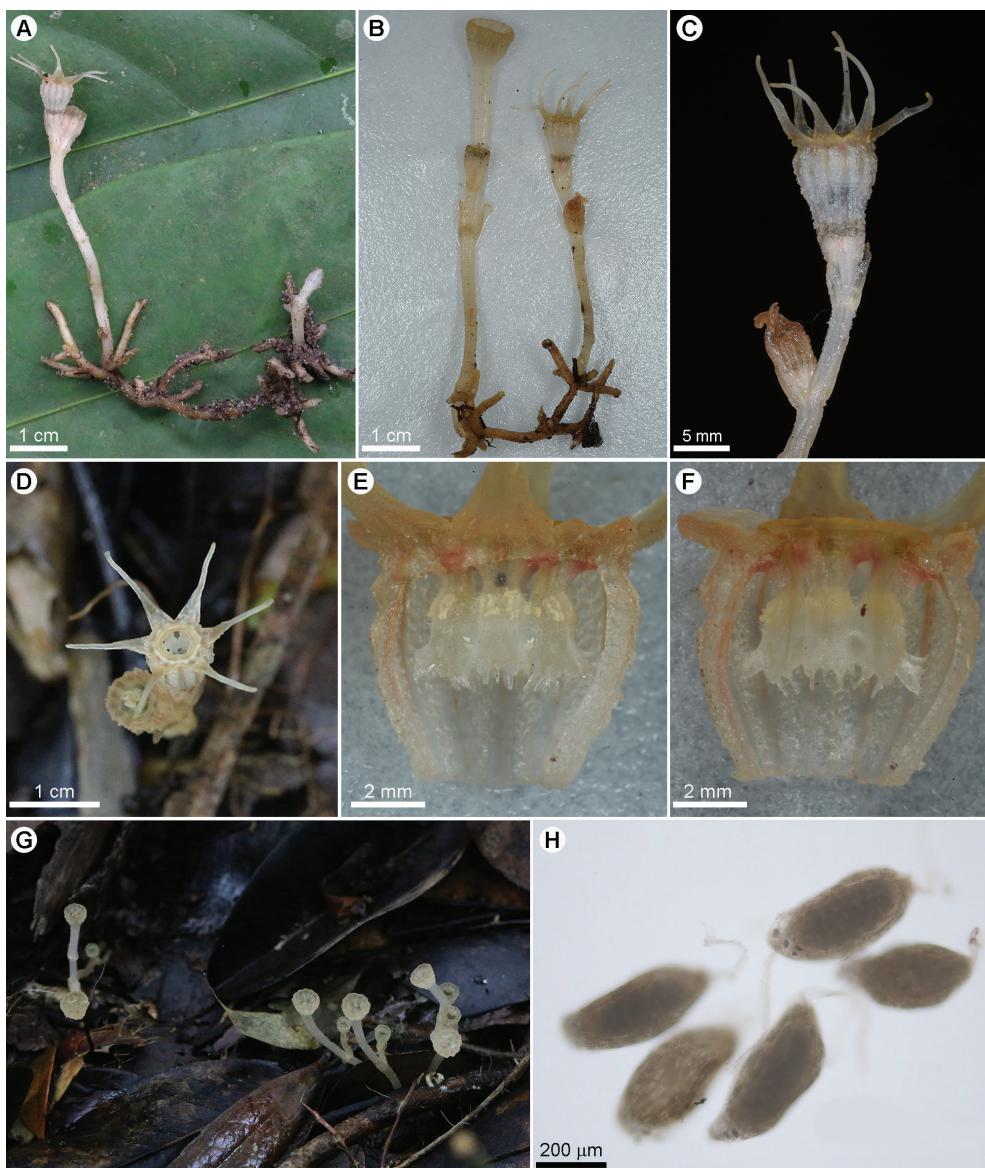


Figure 2. *Thismia filiformis* Chantanaorr. A. Plant with anthetic flower and flower bud; B–C. Flower, lateral view; D. Flower top view, showing annulus and floral lobes; E. Longitudinal section of floral tube showing staminal tube; F. Longitudinal section of floral tube, showing three stamens; G. Fruiting plants in natural habitat; H. Seeds; A, D, G, & H photographed by S. Kin; B, C, E & F by S. Chantanaorrapint.

annulus; filaments free, yellowish, glabrous, ca 2 mm long, ca 1.6 mm wide; connectives broad and flattened, laterally connate to form a tube, ca 2.5 mm long; lateral appendage skirt-like, protruding towards floral tube, not reaching the apex of the connective, shallowly dentate and sparsely hairy on free margins; apex of each connective

(supraconnective) 3-toothed, bright yellow, each tooth bearing a distinct stiff hair; individual stamens with 2 thecae, each theca oblong, ca 0.8 mm long; interstaminal glands present, rounded, placed between bases of lateral appendages. *Ovary* obconical, ca 3 mm long, with papillose longitudinal ridges, placentas 3; style short, 0.5–0.8 mm; stigma 3-lobed,

1.2–1.5 mm long, surface papillose; stigma lobes ovate-oblong, 2-lobed to 1/2. *Fruit* fleshy, cup-shaped, ca 6 mm long, crowned by the persistent basal ring; fruit stalk thickened and lengthened after flowering to 2 cm. *Seeds* ovate to ellipsoid, $0.5\text{--}0.65 \times 0.3\text{--}0.35$ mm, yellowish-brown, seed coat reticulate.

Distribution.— Sri Lanka, Thailand and Cambodia (Fig. 1C).

Specimens examined.— CAMBODIA. Kampot Province [Bokor National Park, evergreen forest near a stream, ca 270 m, $10^{\circ}36'21''\text{N}$, $104^{\circ}4'36''\text{E}$, 17 July 2023, *Kin 11* (PSU); *ibid.*, ca 210 m, $10^{\circ}36'13''\text{N}$, $104^{\circ}4'30''\text{E}$, 8 Sept. 2023, *Kin 22* (PSU); 3 Aug. 2024, *Kin 25* (National Herbarium of Cambodia). SRILANKA. no locality, s.d., *Champion s.n.* (K [K000873453]); *Champion s.n.* (K [K000873453]). THAILAND. Chanthaburi Province [Namtok Phlio National Park, ca 90 m, $12^{\circ}34'30.3''\text{N}$, $102^{\circ}14'28.7''\text{E}$, 12 Aug. 2024, *Chuchuea 512* (BCU)]. Ranong Province [Ngao waterfall S of Ranong, $9^{\circ}51'\text{N}$, $98^{\circ}39'\text{E}$, 100–200 m, 8 July 1992, *K. Larsen et al. 43241* (AAU). Phangnga Province [Noppring, Thung Prayapit, 23 July 2014, *Phaosrichai 120* (QBG); Kura Buri, Bang Wan, Sri Phangnga National Park, Ton Deng Waterfall, ca 50 m, $08^{\circ}59'34.06''\text{N}$, $098^{\circ}27'57.22''\text{E}$, 26 July 2022, *Kin 4* (PSU); 28 July 2022, *Kin 5* (PSU); 7 Aug. 2023, *Kin 15* (PSU); Khao Lak-Lam Ru National Park, Hin Lad waterfall, ca 220 m, $8^{\circ}33'11''\text{N}$, $98^{\circ}25'17''\text{E}$, 7 May 2022, *Kin 1* (PSU); ca 260 m, $8^{\circ}33'12''\text{N}$, $98^{\circ}25'18''\text{E}$, 7 May 2022, *Kin 2* (PSU)].

Habitat and ecology.— In Cambodia, *Thismia gardneriana* was found in lowland secondary forest, elevation of 150–300 m. Flowering and fruiting from June to September.

Conservation status.— This species is not currently under threat, due to several populations being found in Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Thailand, and its occurrence in well-protected areas. According to the IUCN criteria, the conservation status of *Thismia gardneriana* is classified as Least Concern (LC).

Notes.— *Thismia gardneriana* was first established by Thwaites (1864) from Ceylon (Sri Lanka). It is easily recognized in the field by a combination of the following characters: the vermiform roots, rather larger up to 18 cm tall (including flowers), racemes with 2–5 yellowish orange to reddish flowers, and inner floral lobe appendages filiform, 20–32 mm

long. Moreover, the inner surface of the floral tube bears transverse bars, and the apex of each stamen connective has three teeth, each tooth bearing a distinct stiff hair. *Thismia gardneriana* is most similar to *T. brunonis* Griff., the type species in the genus from Tenasserim in Myanmar (Griffith, 1845). However, *T. brunonis* is distinguished by the stamens with numerous small teeth at the apex and acute stigma lobes. *Thismia gardneriana* also resembles *T. arachnites* Ridl., from Malay Peninsular and Thailand (Ridley, 1905; Chantanaorrapint, 2018), but it differs from the latter in the shape of the stigma lobes.

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Figure 3. *Thismia gardneriana* Hook. f. ex Thwaites A. Plants in natural habitat; B. Plant with flower bud; C. Plant with anthetic flower; D. Anthetic flower, showing annulus and floral lobes; E. Longitudinal section of floral tube, showing three stamens; F. Ovary and stigma; G. Seed; H. Roots; A, B, G, & H photographed by S. Kin; C–F. by S. Chantanaorrapint.

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