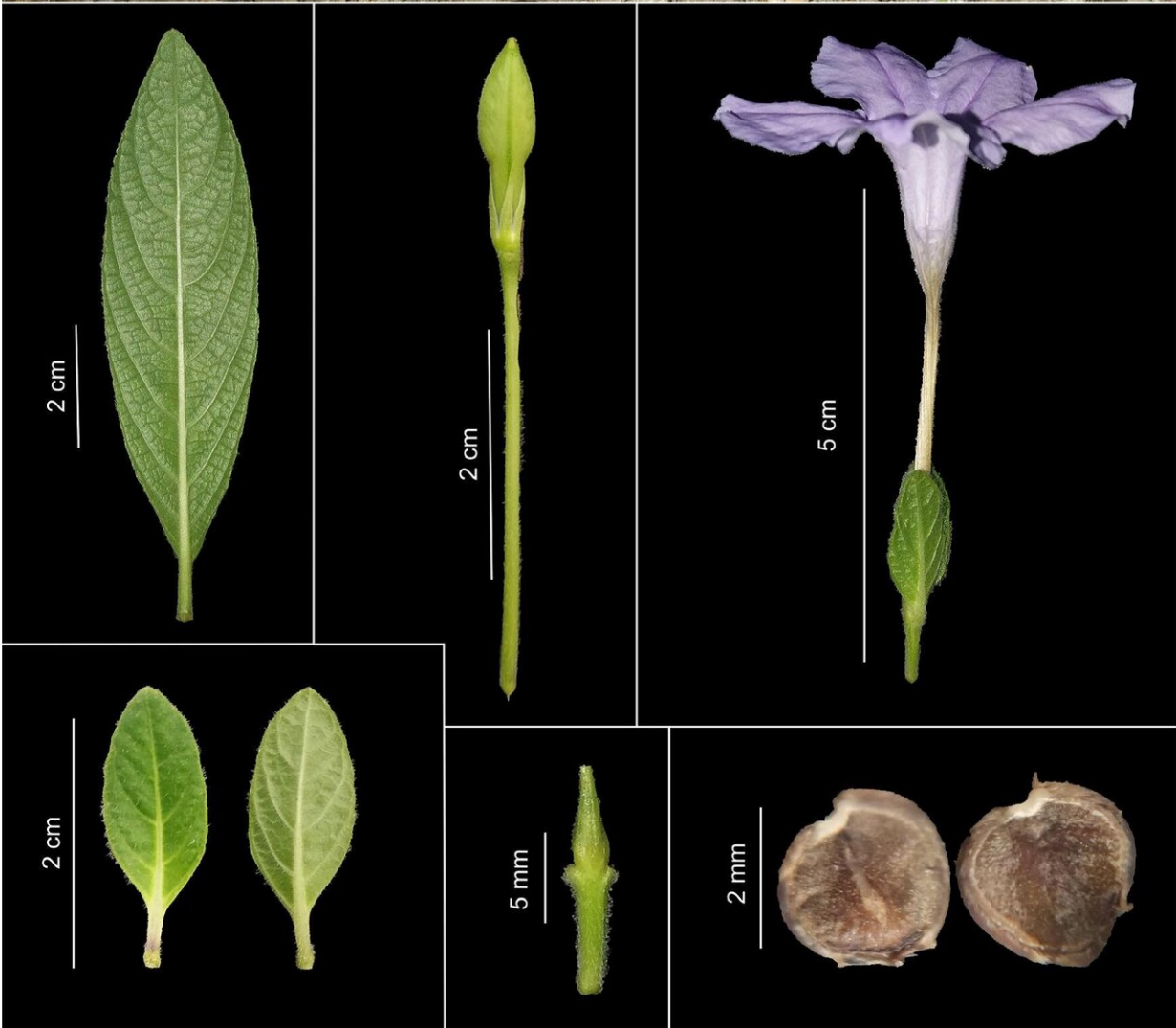


# First record of long-lost *Ruellia bella* reported in Myanmar

November 30 2020, by Zhang Nannan

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Ruellia bella. A. Habit. B. Abaxial Leaf surface. C. Bracteole (left: adaxial surface; right: abaxial surface). D. Infructescence F. Inflorescence E. Peduncle and Calyx. G. Seeds. Credit: Khant Zaw Hein

Ruellia is a very large genus of chiefly tropical American herbs and shrubs (family Acanthaceae) that have showy solitary or paniculate flowers with the simple or two-lobed style recurved at the apex and the two-cell ovary.

During the botanical exploration in Yinmabin District, Sagaing Region Myanmar in June 2020, researchers from the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden (XTBG) and Monywa University collected a flowering Ruellia specimen.

After a meticulous examination of its morphology and comparison with protologues and relevant literature as well as digitized type specimens of the genus Ruellia from Myanmar and neighboring countries, the researchers confirmed it as *Ruellia bella*, a long-lost species known to be endemic to Thailand.

*Ruellia bella* was described by William Grant Craib on his "Contributions to the Flora of Siam," based on specimens collected by Arthur Francis George Kerr in 1915 in Thailand.

In a study published in *Feddes Repertorium*, the researchers presented the rediscovery of *R. bella* after a lapse of 105 years, as the species was recently found in Yinmabin District of Sagaing Region which also corresponds to its first record in Myanmar.

*R. bella* is a subshrub of about 10 cm tall. It is a member of the section *Dipteracanthus* characterized by having solitary flowers in the axils with two foliaceous bracteoles.

According to Craib, *R. bella* is similar to *R. suffruticosa* from Bangladesh and India and *R. macrosiphon* from lower Myanmar. However, it differs in having a longer corolla and wider leaves.

In Myanmar, the species is found growing in tropical dry forest with shaded environment at 60 m above sea level. In Thailand, it is growing in deciduous forest at 300 m above sea level.

It is observed flowering and fruiting in the wild in the month of May and June. The flowers open at night.

Following the Red List criteria of the IUCN Standards and Petitions Subcommittee, the researchers considered the conservation status of *R. bella* as "Data Deficient" (DD).

**More information:** Lost and found: Rediscovery of *Ruellia bella* Craib (Acanthaceae) after over a century, and first record of this species in Myanmar. *Feddes Repertorium*. [doi.org/10.1002/fedr.202000026](https://doi.org/10.1002/fedr.202000026)

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