

New ginger species found in Yunnan

December 14 2020, by Zhang Nannan



Flowers of *Zingiber porphyrochilum*. Credit: TAN Yunhong

Zingiber, commonly known as ginger, is a perennial plant. It is one of the largest genera in Zingiberaceae with about 150 species distributed in tropical to warm-temperate Asia.

During a floristic survey of Yubaiding Forest Farm (Yunnan, China) in

2018, researchers from the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden (XTBG) collected some peculiar specimens of *Zingiber* belonging to sect. *Cryptanthium*.

After studying the [fresh flowers](#), reviewing the protologues, types and conducting [comparative studies](#), the researchers confirmed that the taxon does not match any other [species](#) in sect. *Cryptanthium* and is therefore a new species.

They named the new species as *Zingiber porphyrochilum* for its labellum color and got it published in *Annales Botanici Fennici*.

Zingiber porphyrochilum is a perennial rhizomatous herb. It can reach 1.5 to 2 meters tall, forming clumps, with up to 10 leafy shoots per clump. Its rhizomes are tough, elongate and creeping, externally brownish yellow (fresh rhizomes) to fuscous (dry rhizomes), internally pale yellow (fresh rhizomes) to pale brown (dry rhizomes).

It is similar to *Z. densissimum* in its bilobed ligule and flower shape but differs from it by having a longer clumped pseudostem, longer ligules, brownish yellow corolla lobes, labellum and lateral staminodes brownish yellow at the base, and bright clear red to dark purplish towards the apex and margins.

Zingiber porphyrochilum is currently known only from the type locality at Yubaiding Forest Farm in Xiping, Yunnan, and adjacent areas, where it grows on sandstone soil, in moist, half-shaded areas under semi-evergreen broad-leaved [forest](#).



ingiber porphyrochilum (type material). Credit: DING Hongbo

More information: Hong-Bo Ding et al. Zingiber porphyrochilum (Zingiberaceae), a New Species from Yunnan, China, *Annales Botanici Fennici* (2020). [DOI: 10.5735/085.057.0401](https://doi.org/10.5735/085.057.0401)

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