

New species of mint family found in northern Myanmar

March 17 2021, by Zhang Nannan



Flowering branches of *Premna caridantha*. Credit: TAN Yunhong

Premna is a genus of the mint family (Lamiaceae) of flowering plants. Over the past 20 years, two new species of the genus (*P. bhamoensis* and *P. grandipaniculata*) have been reported or described from Kachin State

of northern Myanmar, one of the richest plant diversity centers in Southeast Asia.

During a fieldwork in 2018, researchers from the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden (XTBG) collected an unknown *Premna* woody climber from Putao District of Kachin State. After careful morphological studies and literature review, the researchers confirmed that the [species](#) is new to science and named it *Premna caridantha* to indicate that the flower of the species superficially looks like a shrimp; especially its incurved corolla tube resembles the back of a shrimp. The [new species](#) was published in *Phytotaxa*.

Premna caridantha is a woody climber and has spike-like thyrses. It is most similar to *P. grandipaniculata* but clearly differs in [leaf shape](#) and corolla characters. Its leaf blade is oblong to ovate and the flowers are strongly zygomorphic. The corolla is tube incurved, slightly longer than calyx; the middle lobe of the lower lip is with a bright yellowish spot; and the stamens are exerted under the upper lip.

Premna caridantha is only known from a single locality in tropical montane forests in northern Myanmar, at an elevation of 1,000–1,500 meters. Since no clear picture of its natural distribution or population status was available, the researchers temporarily list the species as Data Deficient (DD) according to the IUCN Red List Categories.

"*Premna caridantha* is the fourth species having spike-like thyrses in *Premna* and the third new *Premna* species recently discovered from northern Myanmar," said TAN Yunhong of XTBG.



Inflorescences of *Premna caridantha*. Credit: TAN Yunhong



Flowering branch of *Premna caridantha*. Credit: TAN Yunhong



Inflorescences of *Premna caridantha*. Credit: TAN Yunhong



Habit and habitat of *Premna caridantha*. Credit: TAN Yunhong

More information: YUN-HONG TAN et al. *Premna caridantha* (Lamiaceae: Permnoideae), a distinct new species from Kachin State, northern Myanmar, *Phytotaxa* (2021). [DOI: 10.11646/phytotaxa.490.1.10](https://doi.org/10.11646/phytotaxa.490.1.10)

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