

New Agapetes plant species reported from Medog, Tibet

May 5 2022, by Zhang Nannan



Flowering branch of *Agapetes huangiana*. Credit: Yang Bin

Agapetes comprises approximately 100 currently recognized species, most of which are distributed in the Asian subtropical monsoon region. In China, 57 species and two varieties are currently recognized.

During a floristic exploration of Mêdog, Tibet, researchers from the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden (XTBG) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences collected some unknown *Agapetes* materials of an interesting plant with fruits from two locations in the understory of a primeval subtropical forest. After careful morphological comparison, they confirmed the plant represents a new *Agapetes* species and published it in *Taiwania*.

The researchers named the new species as *Agapetes huangiana* in honor of Prof. Huang Suhua (1938–2020), a female botanist in Yunnan University, who made great contributions to the taxonomic study of *Agapetes* in China.

Agapetes huangiana is an evergreen epiphytic shrub. It is morphologically similar to *A. guangxiensis* and *A. epacridea* in having spirally alternate leaves with short pedicels and ovate blades, and branchlets densely covered with spreading setae, but can be clearly distinguished. It has pure white corolla tubes; the anthers without spurs and the indumentum of their leaf blades are also different.



Flowering branch of *Agapetes huangiana*. Credit: Yang Bin

Agapetes huangiana is known only from Beibeng Township of Mêdog County, in Southeast Xizang, Southwest China. It is usually epiphytic on the trees of subtropical evergreen broadleaved forest at elevations of 1,390–2,100 meters.



Mature berries of *Agapetes huangiana*. Credit: Yang Bin

"During our [survey](#), only two populations of *Agapetes huangiana* were encountered, and these two localities are near the roadside. Due to the continuous improvement of road infrastructure, and the continuous development of tourism, this [species](#) is assessed as vulnerable (VU) following the International Union for Conservation of Nature guidelines," said Tan Yunhong of XTBG.

More information: Bin Yang et al, *Agapetes huangiana* (Ericaceae), a new species from Southeast Xizang, China, *Taiwania: International Journal of Biodiversity* (2022). [DOI: 10.6165/tai.2022.67.254](https://doi.org/10.6165/tai.2022.67.254). taiwania.ntu.edu.tw/abstract.p...pe=referance&id=1836

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