

New endemic Agapetes species reported from Yunnan, China

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Agapetes lihengiana. Credit: Yang Bin

Agapetes comprises about 100 species, most of which are found in the subtropical monsoon region of Asia. In China, 59 species and two varieties are recognized.

During a floristic exploration of Yingjiang County, Yunnan Province from 2021 to 2023, researchers from the Xisuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden (XTBG) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) came across an interesting [species](#) of Agapetes. After a detailed study of the morphological characters of the material and similar species, the researchers confirmed that the plant was a [new species](#) to science.

The new species was named *Agapetes lihengiana* in honor of Prof. Li Heng of the Kunming Institute of Botany of CAS, who has made great contributions to our knowledge of the flora of the Gaoligong Mountains in China. The findings are published in the journal *Taiwania*.

Agapetes lihengiana is an epiphytic evergreen shrub. It is morphologically similar to *A. epacridea* and *A. trianguli*, but can be clearly distinguished from the former by its leaf blade with an acute or apiculate apex, prominent secondary veins, and shorter pedicel; and from the latter by its white corolla with five vertical pink stripes, shorter pedicel, and shorter anther.



Agapetes lihengiana. Credit: Yang Bin

Agapetes lihengiana is known only from Yingjiang County of West Yunnan, Southwest China. It is epiphytic on the trees of subtropical evergreen broad-leaved forests at an altitude of 2,100–2,200 m.

"During our [survey](#), only two populations of *Agapetes lihengiana* were found. One site in Sudian Township has *Lanxangia tsaoko* planted under the forest, and this forest is on the edge of the Yunnan Tongbiguan Provincial Nature Reserve. The habitat of this species is threatened by logging in the area. Therefore, we assessed the conservation status of this species as vulnerable according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature guidelines," said Tan Yunhong of XTBG.

More information: Tan Yunhong et al, *Agapetes lihengiana* (Ericaceae), a new species from Yunnan, China. *Taiwania*. DOI: [10.6165/tai.2023.68.355](https://doi.org/10.6165/tai.2023.68.355). taiwania.ntu.edu.tw/abstract/1947

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