

New species of custard apple family found in Myanmar

January 26 2021, by Zhang Nannan



Flower of *Artabotrys chitkokoi*. Credit: Mark Arcebal K. Naive

With over 100 species, *Artabotrys* is a large palaeotropical genus that belongs to the custard apple family (Annonacea), one of the most diverse and primitive families of the angiosperms. In Myanmar, the genus is represented by seven species.

During an expedition to Yinmabin District, Sagaing Region, Myanmar in July 2020, researchers from Monya University of Myanmar and Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden (XTBG) collected an *Artabotrys* specimen with broad, ovate outer petals.

After a thorough examination of its morphology and comparison with protologues and actual and digitized type specimens from across Myanmar and neighboring countries, the researchers discovered that this specimen does not match any known *Artabotrys* [species](#) and confirmed it new to science.

The researchers named the new species as *Artabotrys chitkokoi* in honor of Mr. Chit Ko Ko, a Myanmar botanist noted for his botanical research in Myanmar, and published their study in the *Nordic Journal of Botany*.

Artabotrys chitkokoi is a climber, up to 2.6 meters tall. It is similar to *Artabotrys pleurocarpus* and *A. brevipes*, but differing in having a slightly oblique leaf base, broadly ovate outer petal blades, oblanceolate inner petal blades and monocarp stipes 3–4 mm long.

Artabotrys chitkokoi is so far only known from Yinmabin District, Sagaing Region, Myanmar. Five to seven mature individuals were observed growing as climbers in the tropical dry forest with a semi-open to open canopy. Further assessment is necessary to determine whether

there are other known populations present in other areas. The researchers thus treated this species as "data deficient" (DD).



Plants of *Artabotrys chitkokoi*. Credit: Mark Arcebal K. Naive

More information: Khant Zaw Hein et al. *Artabotrys chitkokoi* (Annonaceae), a new species discovered in Sagaing Region, Myanmar, *Nordic Journal of Botany* (2021). [DOI: 10.1111/njb.02920](https://doi.org/10.1111/njb.02920)

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