New Agapetes plant species reported from Medog, Tibet
5 May 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 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.
“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.


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