

**A NEW SPECIES OF *AMOMUM* ROXB.  
(*ZINGIBERACEAE*) FROM MEGHALAYA, NE INDIA\***

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A new species, *Amomum vermanum* from NE India, is described and illustrated.

*Keywords.* *Amomum vermanum*, Garo, ginger, kokrak, NE India, *Zingiberaceae*.

INTRODUCTION

During the course of a revisionary study of the *Zingiberaceae* of NE India, one of us (ST) collected an interesting specimen of *Amomum* Roxb. from the Garo Hills of Meghalaya. Critical studies revealed that it is different from all hitherto described species of the genus. This new species is described and illustrated here.

***Amomum vermanum* S. Tripathi & V. Prakash, sp. nov. Fig. 1.**

*A. corynostachyo* Wall. affine labello sub-rhomboido, sed differt lamina majore, petiolo longiore (2–3cm), pedunculo perbreuiore, antherae crista semilunata.

Type: India, Meghalaya, Garo Hills, Baghmara, Hatishia forest, 10 v 1997, S. Tripathi 20835 (holo. CAL).

Rhizomatous perennial herb to c.1.5m tall. *Rhizome* creeping, pinkish outside, creamish inside, 30–40cm long (between two shoots), 2–3cm thick, aromatic at maturity. *Stem* c.1cm wide, with 5–9 leaves. *Leaves* petiolate; petiole 2–3cm long; ligule coriaceous, 1cm long; lamina oblong-ob lanceolate, 45–140 × 6–13cm, base attenuate, tip acuminate-caudate, glabrous, margins entire. *Inflorescence* radical, spike subglobose, congested, only one per stem, c.8 × 5cm; peduncle c.5cm long, c.1cm thick, decumbent, covered by reddish, ovate, imbricate, pubescent sheaths. *Bract* c.2.3 × 1.0cm, obovate-acute, margins brown, ciliate towards the tip, persistent. *Bracteole* tubular c.1.5cm long, bilobed, 2-keeled, pubescent. *Flower* one per bract, 5–8 open at one time, c.3cm long, white. *Calyx* tubular, c.2cm long, 3-lobed, pubescent. *Corolla-tube* shorter than the calyx, slightly curved, pubescent outside, entirely glabrous inside; lobes oblong, pinkish yellow, rounded at tip; dorsal lobe 1.4 × 0.7cm; lateral lobes 1.3 × 0.4cm. *Labellum* sub-rhomboid, c.1.5 × 1.0cm, white with fleshy orange, pubescent median band and two papillose swellings towards the base, tip emarginate, orange-yellow, margins entire (more or less crumpled). *Lateral staminodes* subulate, c.2mm long. *Stamen* two-thirds as long as labellum; filament 0.5cm long; antherthecae 0.6cm long, parallel, yellow; crest semilunate, convolute, c.3mm long, c.6mm broad, yellowish. *Epigynous glands* two, united on one side, c.2mm long. *Ovary*

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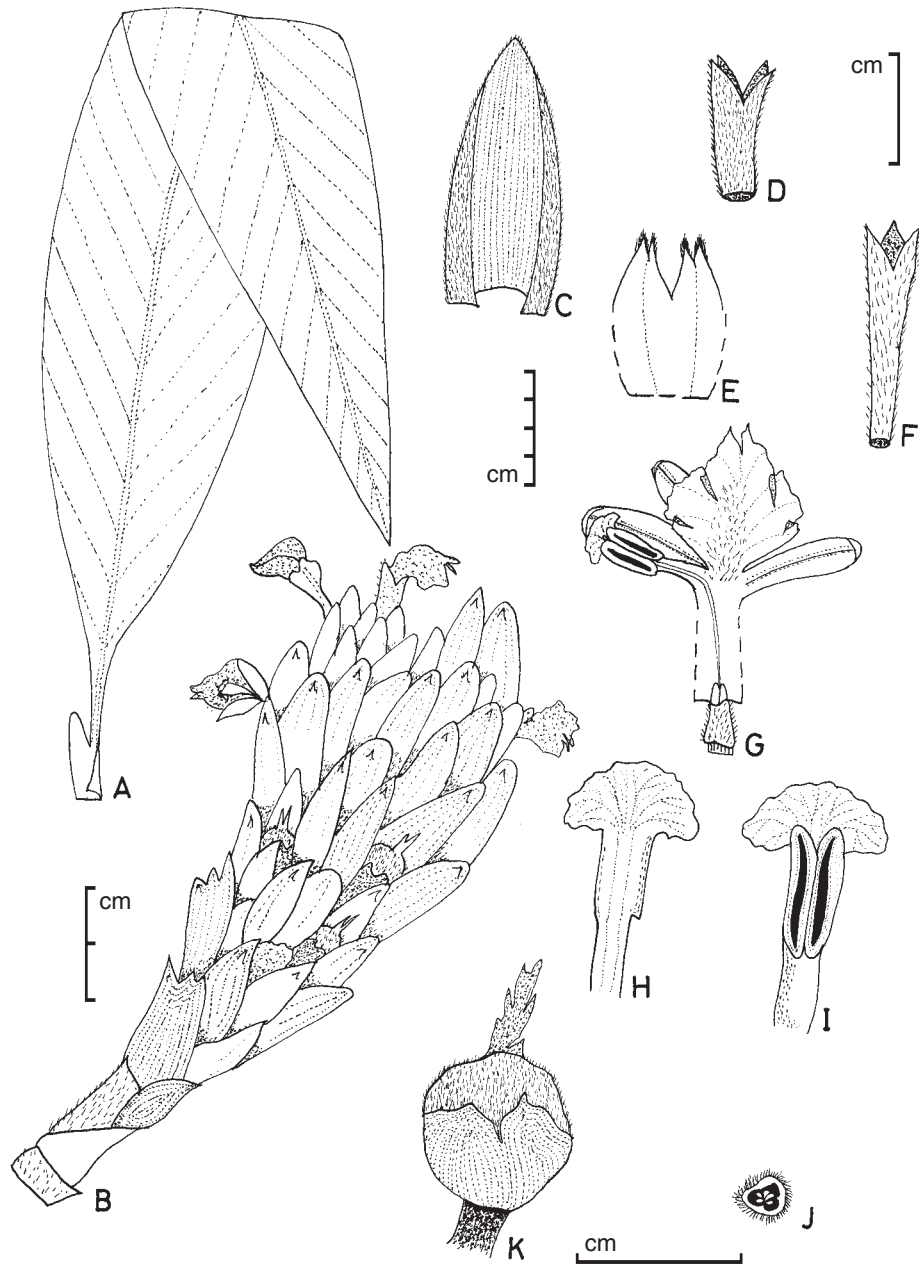


FIG. 1. *Amomum vermanum*: A, leaf  $\times 0.5$ ; B, inflorescence with peduncle  $\times 1$ ; C, bract  $\times 2$ ; D, bracteole  $\times 2$ ; E, bracteole dissected, showing two keels  $\times 2$ ; F, calyx  $\times 2$ ; G, corolla-tube dissected  $\times 2$ ; H, stamen, outer view  $\times 3$ ; I, stamen, inner view  $\times 3$ ; J, ovary in TS  $\times 3$ ; K, fruit with persistent bracteole  $\times 3$  (S. Tripathi 20835).

c.0.5cm long, villous, trilocular with axile placentation; style filiform c.2.0cm long, ciliate; stigma cup-shaped, opening hairy. *Fruit* globose, red-brown, pubescent c.1cm across, covered lower-half with persistent bracteole; seed brownish with white aril. *Fl. and Fr.* April–June.

*Amomum vermanum* S. Tripathi & V. Prakash is allied to *Amomum corynostachyum* Wall. in having a sub-rhomboid labellum, but differs from the latter in having a larger lamina, longer petiole (2–3cm long), much shorter peduncle and a semilunate anther-crest.

*Vernacular name.* Kokrak (Garo).

*Use.* Fruit used by Garo people in the form of spices and raw food.

*Ecology.* In shady places, in margins of dense forest at c.500m altitude.

*Etymology.* The new species is named after Dr D.M. Verma, a well-known retired Scientist of the Botanical Survey of India, who contributed to the study of the *Zingiberaceae* of NE India.

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