

## A NEW SPECIES OF RHODODENDRON FROM YUNNAN

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ABSTRACT. A new species of *Rhododendron*, *R. gemmiferum* M. N. & W. R. Philipson, is described from Yunnan in SW China. It has features of both sect. *Lapponicum* and subsect. *Triflora* but cannot be assigned to either.

Between 1917 and 1923 George Forrest made four collections of a small rhododendron which remained in the herbarium of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, as unidentified material. The same species was also collected by Joseph Rock in 1923. Annotations on the sheets indicate that it was recognized as an unnamed species, but that it was left undescribed because its characters fitted none of the recognized series of the genus. The size of the leaves and type of scales on them resemble those of Section *Lapponicum*, whereas the appearance and distribution of the buds resemble subsect. *Triflora*. In revising Section *Lapponicum* it has become clear to us that this species cannot be included in that section. This is principally because of the characteristic arrangement of the large buds in the axils of the upper leaves which are usually separated by distinct internodes, and also because of the imbricate arrangement of the cataphylls of these buds. In addition, the epidermal cells of the lower surface of the leaf lack the papillate processes found in all members of Section *Lapponicum*, except the aberrant *R. setosum*, which we propose to remove to a separate section. These features are all typical of subsect. *Triflora*, but the small leaves and dense covering of scales on the lower surface of the leaves do not resemble any species currently included in that section. The species is, therefore, described here without being attributed to any series or section.

### *Rhododendron gemmiferum* M. N. & W. R. Philipson, sp. nov.

Frutex erectus ramosissimus ad 60 cm altus. *Surculi* foliis dispersis, gemmis lateralibus saepe magnis in superioribus axillis. *Gemmarum* squamae imbricatae. *Folia* elliptica ad late elliptica, 12-24(-26) × 5-10(-12) mm; costa prominens; venae laterales et venularum rete manifestum; foliorum superficies atro-olivacea squamis pallidis ornata late dispersis; pagina foliorum inferior pallide hepatica ad mellea saepe fuscioribus maculis punctata squamis contingentibus vel non contingentibus. *Fasciculus* circiter 4-florus, pedicello ad 12 mm longo. *Calyx* 1-1.5 mm longus, lobis rotundatis, margine lepidoto et interdum ciliolato. *Corolla* atroroseo-purpurea ad pallido-lavandula. *Stamina* 10, stylo multo breviora.

CHINA. Yunnan: Li-ti-ping, open pasture, 3350-3650 m, vi 1917, *Forrest* 13902 (holo. E); Chienchuan-Mekong divide (26° 30' N, 99° 40' E), 3350-3650 m, in thickets and cane brakes, x 1922, *Forrest* 22511 (E), 4260 m, margins of thickets, x 1922, *Forrest* 23004 (E), 3650 m, stony alpine meadows, vi 1923, *Forrest* 23356 (E); Mt Kintzushan, west of Yangtze bend at Shiku, near Tungtien, vi 1923, *Rock* 9484 (E).

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Erect much branched shrub up to 60 cm high. Branches covered in golden-brown scales, with leaves dispersed along the shoots, and often bearing large lateral buds in the upper axils. Bud-scales imbricated. Leaves elliptic to broadly elliptic, apex rounded to sub-acute, mucronate, base cuneate, petiole 2-4 mm long, brown lepidote, blade 12-24(-26) × 5-10(-12) mm, margin flat to sub-revolute, mid-rib channelled above, prominent below, lateral veins and reticulations visible, upper surface dull dark olive-green with widely dispersed pale scales, undersurface pale tan to honey-coloured, often with darker speckling, scales contiguous to discontinuous, uniformly golden, or with some tan-coloured scales intermixed. Truss about 4-flowered, pedicel up to 12 mm long, lepidote. Calyx 1-1.5 mm long, lepidote at base, lobes broadly rounded, margin lepidote and occasionally slightly ciliate. Corolla deep rose-purple to pale lavender, broadly funnel-shaped, tube 4-5.5 mm long, lobes 9-10 mm long, pubescent in the throat, elepidote. Stamens 10, 12-14 mm long, filaments hairy near the base. Ovary 2 mm long, covered in pale scales with a narrow basal pubescent band. Style 15-16.5 mm long, longer than the stamens, minutely pubescent at the base. Stigma capitate. Capsule cylindric, 6 mm long, lepidote, calyx lobes persistent. Distribution. Known only from a limited area in Yunnan, west of the Yangtze River, from Li-ti-ping southwards to Chienchuan.