

A NOTE ON THE FIRST FLOWERING COLLECTIONS OF AGAPETES SIMILIS & A. GRIFFITHII

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ABSTRACT. The first flowering collections of *Agapetes similis* and *A. griffithii* (Ericaceae), previously known only from material in fruit and in early bud respectively, are described and discussed.

Amongst a collection of Ericaceae made by the Forest Research Institute, Dehra Dun, India and forwarded to Edinburgh for checking were two particularly interesting flowering collections from Arunachal Pradesh (formerly North East Frontier Agency) which are worthy of detailed description.

In the following account all floral measurements are made from rehydrated material.

Agapetes similis Airy Shaw, Fig. 1.

A rare epiphyte with reddish flowers collected near Ziro along Daporjo road, Subansiri district, 3 xi 1977, Dr S. S. R. Bennet & H. B. Naithani No. 3350.

The material agrees very closely with the previous specimens collected from the same district and is apparently only the third collection of this species to be made. Both previous collections (Cox & Hutchison 358 (holotype K; iso. E) and Kingdon Ward 13643 (BM)) were however in fruit so this is the first record of flowering material. The corymbose inflorescences which Airy Shaw (*Kew Bull.* 21:473, 1968) noted as 3-flowered are in fact 3-5-flowered in the Edinburgh isotype and this new material has 2-4-flowered inflorescences.

Pedicel glabrous, 14 × 1 mm, expanding at the base of the flower into an epicalyx-like cupule 3 mm wide. *Calyx* glabrous; tube 2 mm long × 2.4 mm wide; limb 4 mm long divided to 3 mm; segments entire, narrowly acute. *Corolla* glabrous, 21 × 7 mm, ± cylindrical but distinctly five-angled; tube dark red and lacking a distinctive pattern of veins; lobes 3 mm long, narrowly acute, erect or slightly reflexed. *Stamens* 10; filaments c. 3 mm long, robust, only slightly flattened, glabrous; anthers without spurs. 16 mm long; the sacs 4.5 mm long with a granular echinulate surface and with two small downward projections on the inner face c. 0.4 mm long; tubules smooth, straight or slightly curved inwards, 12 mm long, coherent with each other and with the tubules of the other stamens, opening by two elongate introrse slits up to c. 4 mm long. *Style* 20 mm, smooth and glabrous. *Disc* slightly raised and with small corrugations round the top, glabrous.

The material was first thought to be *Agapetes saligna* (Hook.f.) Hook.f. but the corolla lobes are too short and the pedicel apex too broad for that

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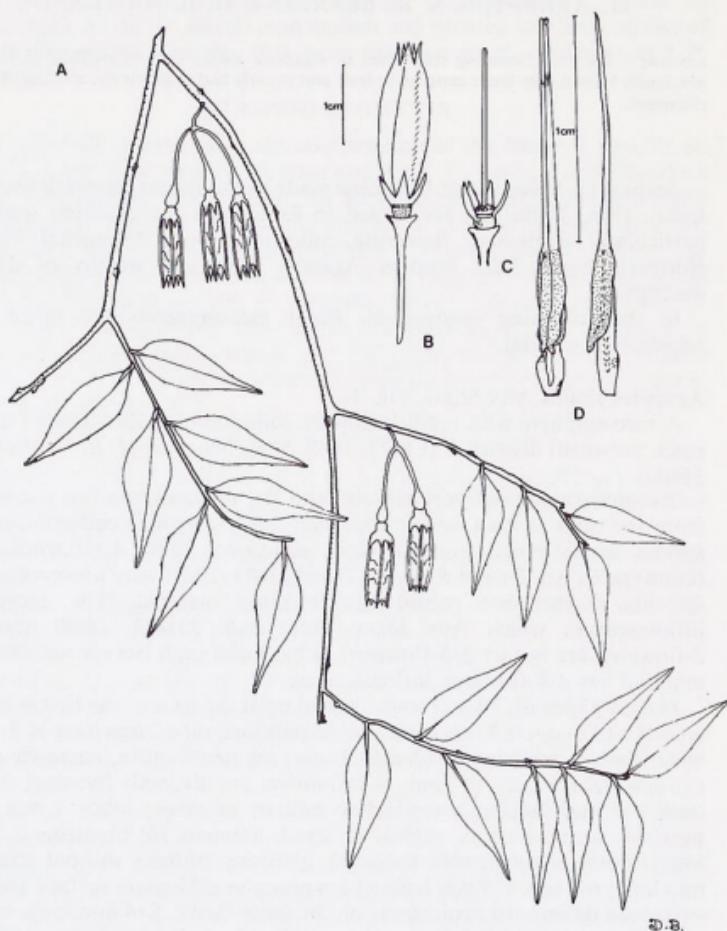


FIG. 1. *Agapetes similis*. A, habit, \times c. $\frac{1}{2}$; B, flower; C, pistil and calyx (with one lobe removed); D, stamens.

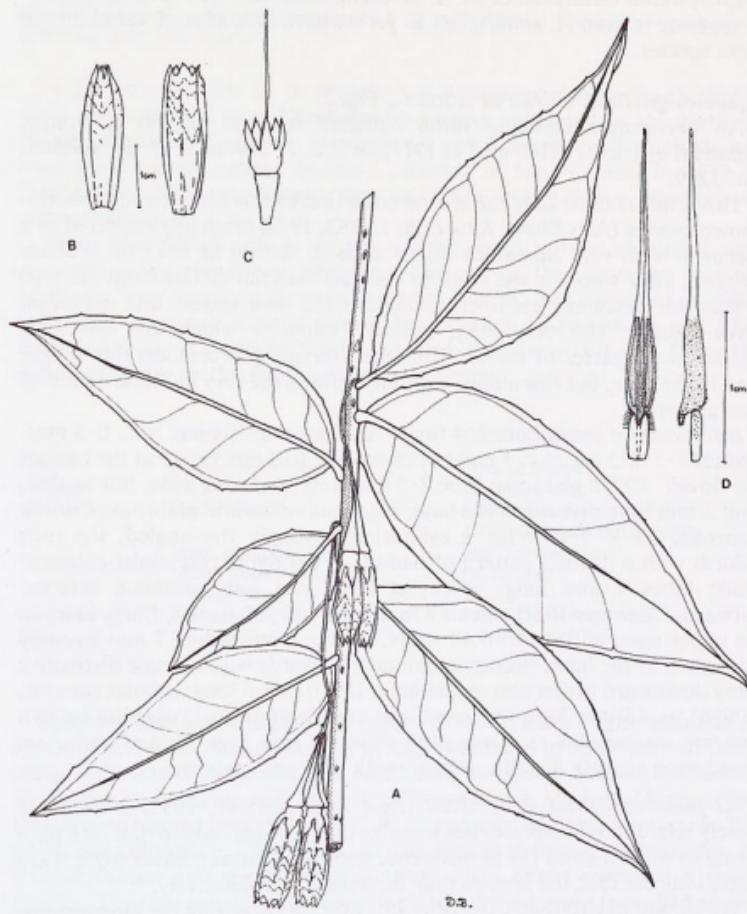


FIG. 2. *Agapetes griffithii*. A, habit, \times c. $\frac{1}{2}$; B, corollas; C, ovary and calyx with stigma; D, stamens.

species. Airy Shaw (op. cit., 1968) draws attention to the affinity of *A. similis* with *A. atrosanguinea* Airy Shaw and the flowers confirm this, the measurements being close to those given in the type description of the latter species (Airy Shaw, *Kew Bull.* 13:494, 1958). The more robust 7-13-flowered inflorescence of *A. atrosanguinea* may be a good character to separate it from *A. similis*, but as yet we have little idea of variability in these species.

Agapetes griffithii Clarke in Hook.f., Fig. 2.

An uncommon climbing shrub collected between Hapoli & Ponge, Subansiri district, c. 2100 m, 1 xi 1977, Dr S. S. R. Bennet & H. B. Naithani No. 3299.

This appears to be only the second collection of this hitherto very poorly-known species (Airy Shaw, *Kew Bull.* 13:492, 1958) originally collected as a specimen with very immature flower buds in Assam in 1837 by William Griffith, after whom it was named. The new material differs from the type in that the leaves are less finely acuminate but their texture and nervation agree closely. The very long, slender peduncles which are the most distinctive character of the present collection are also considerably longer than in the type, but this almost certainly reflects the very immature state of that gathering.

Inflorescence corymbose 2-4-flowered. *Peduncle* 3-4 cm \times c. 0.5 mm. *Pedicel* 1.5-2.5 cm \times c. 1 mm but expanding to 3 mm broad at the base of the flower. *Calyx* glabrous; tube 2.5 mm long \times 3 mm wide, not angled; limb 5 mm long divided to the base; segments entire and glabrous. *Corolla* glabrous, 25 \times 7-10 mm, \pm cylindrical, strongly five-angled, the tube reddish with a distinct pattern of banding from the darker violet-coloured veins; lobes 4 mm long, green, at first erect but becoming reflexed outwards. *Stamens* 10; filaments 8 mm long, pale, flattened, finely hairy in the upper part; anthers without spurs, 22 mm long; sacs c. 7 mm strongly echinulate at the base, becoming granular upwards with a single distinctive spiny downward projection on the inner face 0.5 mm long; tubules smooth, straight, c. 15 mm long, coherent and tapering upwards, opening by two elongate introse slits c. 4 mm long. *Style* 27 mm, smooth and glabrous, broadening slightly distally. *Disc* smooth, flat and glabrous.

A. pseudogriffithii Airy Shaw (*Kew Bull.* 1935:41, 1935) is certainly closely related to this species but its calyx limb divided only to half its length seems to offer a good floral difference and the narrower leaves (to c. 4 cm wide) indicate that the species may be separable vegetatively.

We should like to thank Dorothy Brunton for preparing the illustrations.