

## *ERIA EXTINGTORIA* (LINDL.) OLIV. (ORCHIDACEAE) – A NEW RECORD FOR INDIA FROM ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS

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*Eria* Lindl. is one of the largest and polymorphic genera of the family Orchidaceae with more than 370 species, distributed across tropical Asia from Himalayas, China, Philippines, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Pacific Islands to Fiji (Pearce & Cribb, 2002). In India, about 70 species and 4 varieties of the genus are recorded from N.E. India, Eastern Himalayas, Western Himalayas and Peninsular India to Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Out of these, Andaman & Nicobar Islands accounts for 3 species and 2 varieties of which *E. andamanica* Hook. f and *E. bractescens* Lindl. var. *kurzii* (T. Anders.) Hook.f. are endemic to these Islands (Sathish Kumar & Manilal, 1994). During one of the field visits to North Andaman during May-June, 2003 an interesting specimen of *Eria* was collected from Diglipur and cultivated in BSI experimental garden. The specimen has got flowering in March 2004. After a detailed study and the scrutiny of the available literature it was identified as *Eria extinctoria* (Lindl.) Oliv., hitherto known only from Myanmar.

*Eria extinctoria* (Lindl.) Oliv. in Bot. Mag. Ser. 3:27: t. 5910, 1871; Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 5: 788. 1890; B. Grant, The Orchids of Burma (including Andaman Islands) p.138. 1895; Kraenzl., *Orchidaceae-Monandrae-Dendrobiinae* 2- in A. Engler (ed.) Das Pflanzenreich Hft. 50:18. 1911; W.J. Kress & al., Check. Myanmar p. 77. 2003.

*Dendrobium extincitorium* (Lindl.) Bot. Reg. 21: sub t. 1756. no. iv. 1836 et in J. Linn. Soc. Bot. 3: 11. 1859; Reichb.f. in Walp. Ann. 6: 308. 1861.

Caespitose epiphytic herbs, up to 8 cm high. Roots cylindrical, 0.1-0.2 cm thick, arising from the base of each pseudobulb, hirsute, with up to 0.5 mm long, obtuse hairs. Pseudobulbs clustered, subglobose-cylindrical, depressed, 6–12 × 4–6 mm, 5–7 veins diverge from the middle of truncate apex; sheathed below, sheaths 10–15 × 2–3 mm, fibrous, entire, acute-acuminate. Leaves 1–3 per pseudobulb, seen only during rainy season, absent when flowering 2–3 × 0.4–0.5 cm, ovate-lanceolate, entire, acuminate, 1-veined. Scape terminal, solitary or in pair, arise from the top of pseudobulb in place of leaves, 4–6 cm long, sheathed at base; sheaths 2, unequal, scale-like with cut apex; peduncle purplish or crimson below, slender, filiform, glabrous, 3.0–4.5 cm long, with 1-2 minute scales along the length. Flowers solitary, rarely 2, white with a yellow blotch at center, 1.5–2.5 cm long, 1 cm across,

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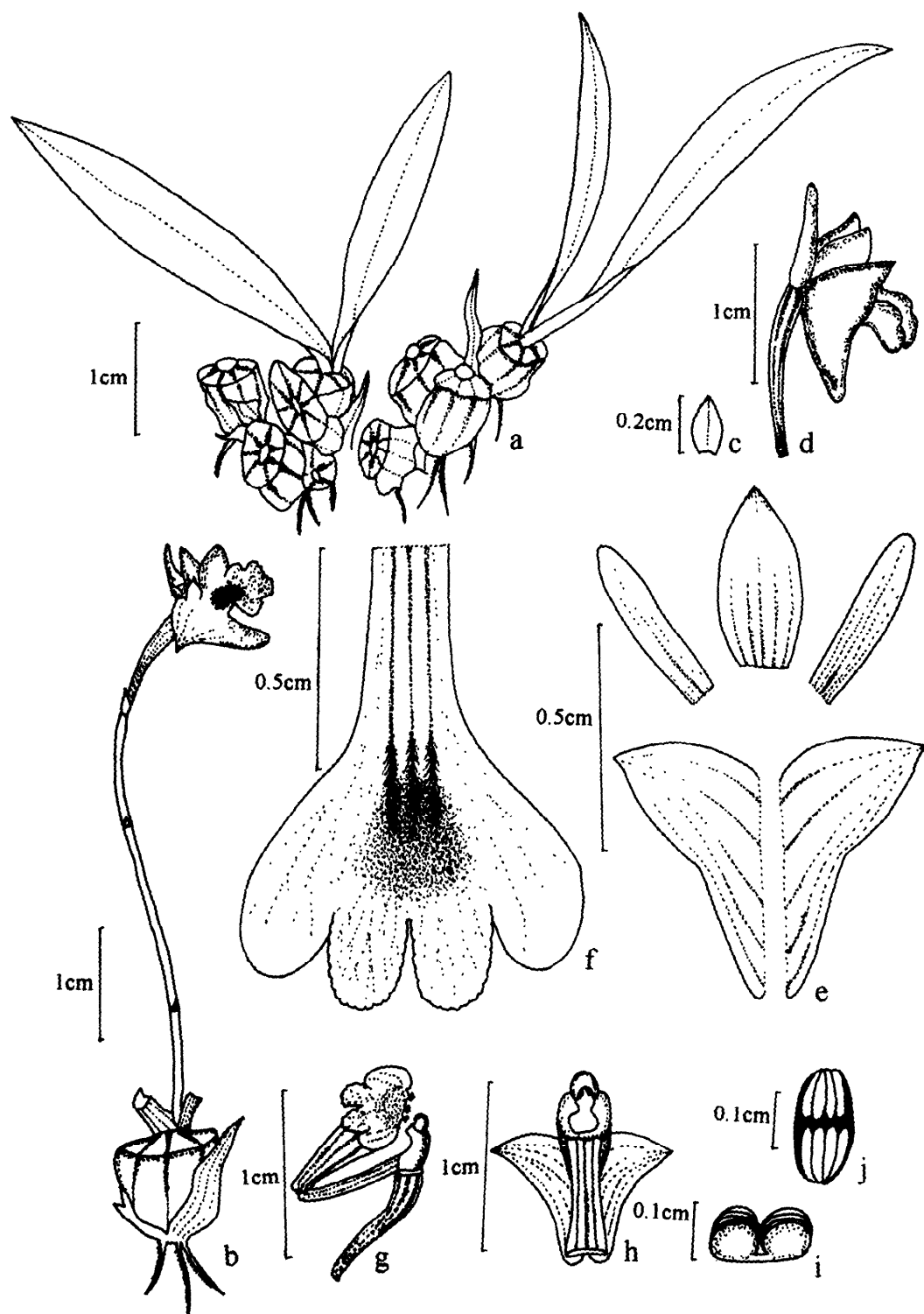


Fig. 1: *Eria extinctoria* (Lindl.) Oliv.: a. Plant (vegetative); b. Plant (flowering); c. Floral bract; d. Flower; e. Sepals and petals; f. Lip, g. Lip with column & foot; h. Column & foot (front view); i. Pollinia (lateral view); j. Pollinia (front view).



Plate 2 : *Erica extintoria* (Lindl.) Oliv. – a. A small population of the plant in flowering; b. A vegetative plant.

floral parts glabrous outside. Floral bract 1.5–2.0 × 1.0–1.5 mm, membranous, ovate-lanceolate, entire, acute, 1-veined. Dorsal sepal *ca* 4.0 × 2.0 – 2.5 mm, ovate, entire, acute, 5-veined, white, with a tinge of pink. Lateral sepals 4–5 × 5–6 mm, spreading, obliquely ovate, entire, acute, 5-veined, basal portion produced downwards, being adnate to the column-foot, forming a 5–6 cm long, extinguisher-like, incurved, blunt, greenish tipped, rounded or slightly notched mentum. Petals 4–5 × 1–1.5 mm, linear-oblong, membranous, entire, obtuse, 5-veined. Lip white with a yellow blotch at the center, with obscure branched veins, *ca* 1 cm long, 8 mm broad through the base, directly joined to the column-foot forming an acute angle, 3-lobed, clawed at base; claw up to 5 mm long; lateral lobes 4 × 2 mm, ovate-lanceolate, entire, obtuse; middle-lobe sub-divided into two, lobules 3 × 2 mm, slightly overlapping with side-lobes, sub-orbicular with crenate margin; keels three, prominent, originating from the base of the column, running along the foot and culminating on the midlobe, papillose at the anterior portion. Column short, 3–4 mm long, yellowish below, foot elongated, 6–7 mm long, forming an obtuse angle with the column. Anther convex, pink-purple, blotched with deep red on each side; pollinia 8, in 2 bundles of 4, connate at the base by their suddenly tapering caudicles and an elastic cobwebby substance. Pedicel + ovary 1.5 – 2.0 cm long, glabrous; capsule pyriform, angular, *ca* 5 × 2 mm.

*Flowering* : Epiphyte on *Careya arborea* trees in primary forests.

*Specimens examined* : India : North Andaman, Diglipur, 24.3.2004, P. G. Diwakar 198789 PBL; Myanmar: Amherst 28.3.1849, Falconer 702 CAL; Moulmein, April, 1898, D. Prain s.n. 452938-CAL; Moulmein, May, 1911, Meebold 15502-CAL; Burmah, W. G. Giles s.n. 452936-CAL.

*Distribution* : India: Andaman & Nicobar Islands, North Andaman; Myanmar.

*Note* : This curious little *Eria* species belongs to section *Conchidium* Griff., which is characterized by small clustered habit and hysteroanthus inflorescence, with slender, glabrous, one to few flowered scape.

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