

***Syzygium subscandens* (Myrtaceae), a New Species from Sumatra**

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Abstract

A new species of *Syzygium* Gaertn. from Sumatra is described and illustrated: *Syzygium subscandens* Widodo. Morphologically the new species is similar to *S. garciniifolium*, but differs in being a small tree and in having longer terminal and axillary panicles.

Introduction

Sumatra is one of the largest islands in Indonesia and is one of the richest in biodiversity (Whitten, 1999), however, it is also one of the least known flora in the country. Land conversions, the development of industry, illegal logging, and forest fires have created severe pressure on the biodiversity of Sumatra.

Species of *Syzygium* are key components of Southeast Asian and Sumatran lowland forests. They provide nectar, pollen, and fruits as food for a wide range of insects, birds and mammals (Parnell *et al.*, 2007). They are also of economic importance to humans as sources of fruits, timber, tannin and medicine (Heywood *et al.*, 2007).

The genus *Syzygium* is largest in the family Myrtaceae, comprising *ca* 1200 species (Craven *et al.*, 2006), or approximately 1040 species (Govaerts *et al.*, 2008). The current concept of *Syzygium* includes species with and without an intercotyledonary inclusion; the inflorescences are either solitary or in clusters, either on old trunk, axillary, or terminal; and the calyx may be either calyprate or free (Craven *et al.* 2006).

The new species was identified during preparation of a revision of *Syzygium* in Sumatra. To make sure that the new species has not been named and reported anywhere else outside of Sumatra, we compared it with specimens of morphologically similar species from the surrounding islands kept in BO, L and K.

The new species of *Syzygium* is an important discovery for Sumatra because it creates awareness and appreciation of the island's tree biodiversity. The new information can be used for the development of an effective conservation strategy.

Syzygium subscandens Widodo, *sp. nov.*

Frutices subscandentes. Ramuli teretes, luteo-brunnei pallidi. Folia coriacea, obovata, basi et apice obtusa. Inflorescentiae terminales et laterales, paniculatae; floribus cruciformibus stellatis, hypanthio obconico-urceolati; corollis alboroseis. –**Typus:** Indonesia. Sumatra WC, west side of Mt. Merapi, 2,300 m alt., 22 Jun 1953, *JV Brossum W 2201* (holotype, BO!; iso, L.). **Fig. 1.**

Treelets, climbing on tree. Twigs terete, smooth, yellowish. **Leaves** obovate, 14-18 x 7.5-10.6 cm, drying yellowish brown, lower surface paler; base obtuse, apex obtuse; petiole thick, not swollen, 1-1.2 cm long; midrib narrowly furrowed on the upper surface, rounded, raised below; lateral veins 5-8 pairs, straight or curved, 2-2.8 cm apart, at an angle of 45°-70°; oil dots none or few; intramarginal vein looped, faint, 5-10 mm from margin. **Inflorescence** a panicle, up to 9 cm long, to 9 cm wide, terminal and axillary; peduncle 2-9 mm; ultimate inflorescence axis *ca* 5 mm long. **Flower** buds turbinate, white; pseudostipe sometimes none, hypanthium smooth, obconic to urceolate. Sepals 4, free, triangular, margin hyaline, 5-8 mm long and wide, pink. Petals 4, free, whitish pink, 4-8 mm long and wide, orbicular or slightly triangular, a few gland dots per petal. Stamens deciduous, not seen. Style not seen. **Fruits** globose *ca* 5 mm (immature). **Seeds** solitary, globose, *ca* 3 mm diameter.

Habitat: Primary forest, climbing on trees.

Distribution: Known only from Mt. Merapi in Sumatra.

Notes: *S. subscandens* looks like *S. garciniifolium*. It differs in its habit, being a small tree or shrub climbing on trees, and in its longer terminal and axillary panicles. It is characterised also by the thick leathery leaves with very faint looped intramarginal veins.

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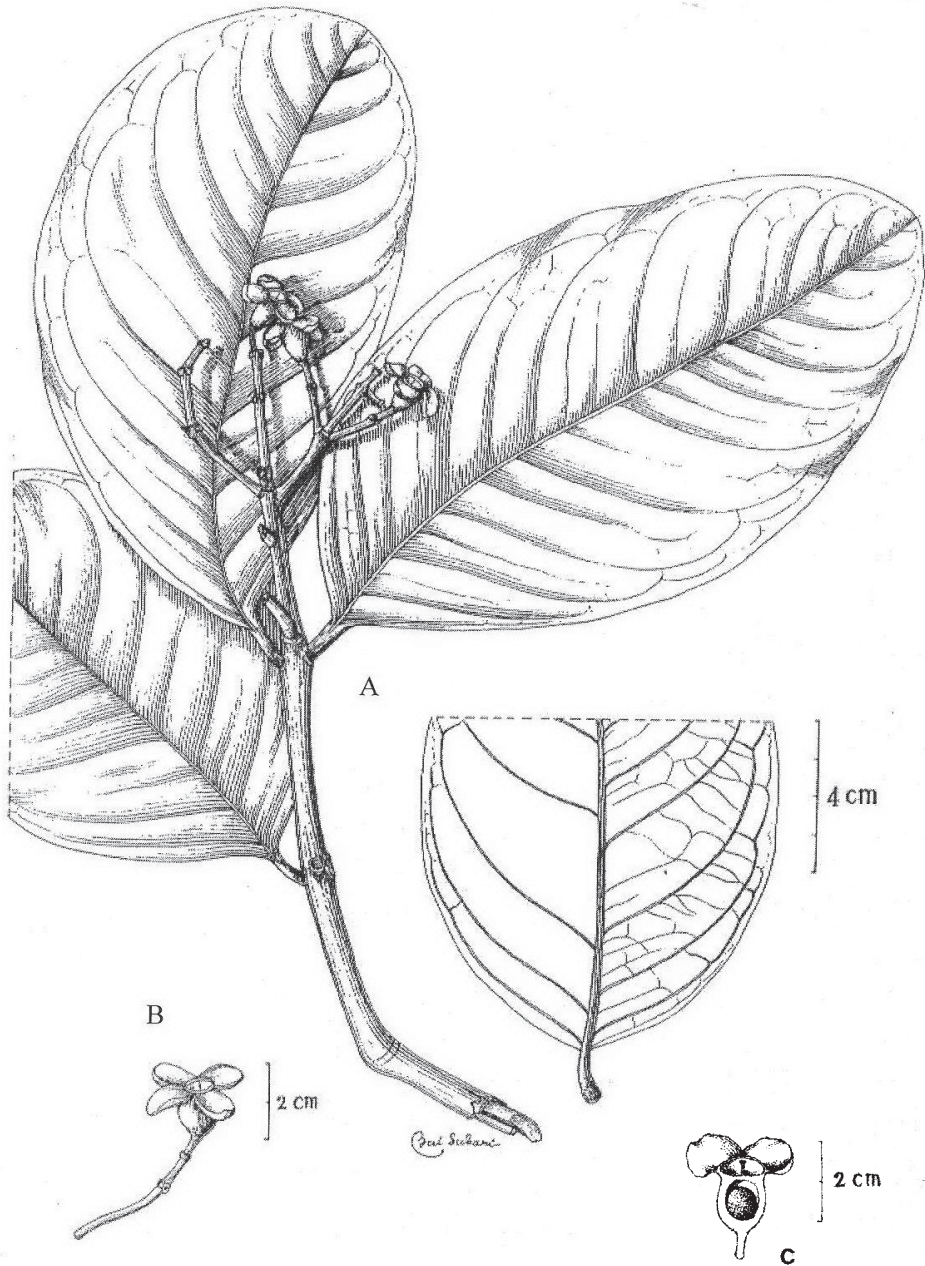


Figure 1. *Syzygium subscandens*. A. Leafy twig with inflorescence; B. Flower; C. Young Fruit. A, B and C from JV Brossum W No. 2201 (BO). Drawn by Subari.

Dublin, Ireland, is appreciated for references. Subari is also thanked for drawing the figures. The Directorate General of Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia is acknowledged for providing scholarships via IPB (Bogor Agricultural University).

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