

A new species of *Kopsia* (Apocynaceae) of unknown provenance

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ABSTRACT. The new species *Kopsia obscura* D.J.Middleton in the Apocynaceae is described.

Keywords. Cultivated, *Kopsia fruticosa*, *Kopsia griffithii*, Rauvolfioid

Introduction

The genus *Kopsia* Blume in the Apocynaceae was revised by Middleton (2004) and only one new species has been described since then (Middleton, 2005) bringing the total to 24 species. It belongs to the Rauvolfioid group of Apocynaceae (Endress et al., 2019). *Kopsia* is native from the Andaman Islands, Myanmar and southern China, through continental Southeast Asia and Malesia to northern Australia and Vanuatu and the islands of Micronesia. The large majority of species have white corollas, albeit often with a coloured 'eye' at the corolla throat. There are a few pink-flowered species, most notably the commonly cultivated *Kopsia fruticosa* (Roxb.) A.DC.

In the last few years, a pink-flowered *Kopsia* species has come into cultivation in Singapore. Enquiries as to its provenance have so far not yielded an answer except that the source of the cultivated material was Chatuchak Market in Bangkok. None of the field botanists that I have asked in Thailand have said they have seen it in the wild there. The species could have come from either neighbouring Myanmar or Laos, both of which are noted for their extremely low collection densities resulting in a relatively poor knowledge of their native plant diversities (Middleton et al., 2019). But in the absence of wild-collected material, it could also have come from anywhere else in the region. With its combination of glabrous branches, dark pink corollas throughout, the long corolla tube, narrow corolla lobes and pubescent ovary, it fails to key out to any known species in Middleton (2004) and Middleton (2005).

Taxonomic treatment

Kopsia obscura D.J.Middleton, **sp. nov.**

Similar to *Kopsia fruticosa* (Roxb.) A.DC. in the pink corolla but differs in the smaller stature (shrub to 50 cm tall in *K. obscura*, shrub or tree to 6 m tall in *K. fruticosa*), glabrous branchlets (pubescent in *K. fruticosa*) and mostly narrower corolla lobes (5–5.7 mm wide in *K. obscura*, 5.5–16 mm wide in *K. fruticosa*). Also similar to *Kopsia*

griffithii King & Gamble in general appearance, especially in the leaves, but differs in inflorescence structure (shorter and more congested in *K. obscura*), corolla colour (pink in *K. obscura*, white with yellow 'eye' in *K. griffithii*) and nectary indumentum (glabrous in *K. obscura*, pubescent in *K. griffithii*). – TYPE: Cultivated in Singapore Botanic Gardens, beside Holtum Hall, 21 June 2022, *Leong SING2022-640* (holotype SING [SING0370344]). (Fig. 1)

Shrub to 50 cm tall; branchlets square in cross section, angles slightly winged in young growth, pale brown, sparsely lenticellate, glabrous. **Leaves** opposite; petioles 0.2–0.3 cm long, glabrous; lamina elliptic, 4.8–8 × 1.4–2.8 cm, apex acuminate, base cuneate, margin entire, 10–16 secondary veins on each side of midrib, joining in a looped intramarginal vein, secondary veins not very distinct from reticulate tertiary venation, all venation slightly prominent above and beneath when dried but more or less flush when fresh, glabrous above and beneath. **Inflorescences** dichasial, congested, axes dark red, 4–5 cm long with axes 0.9–1.7 cm long, glabrous throughout; peduncle 0.2–0.6 cm long; bracts cupulate, orbicular, c. 1 mm long, glabrous; pedicels 1.2–6 mm long; flowers 5-merous. **Sepals** dark red, ovate, 1.4–2 × 0.8–1.2 mm, apices rounded to emarginate, glabrous except sparsely ciliate. **Corolla** salverform, aestivation dextrorse, dark pink throughout; tube 27–31 mm long, c. 2.8 mm wide, 4.7–5.4 times as long as lobes, glabrous outside, pubescent in throat and in upper half of tube, hairs below the anthers pointing downwards; lobes narrowly elliptic, 13.5–14 × 5–5.7 mm, 2.5–2.7 times as long as wide. **Stamens** inserted at c. 27 mm from corolla base, apex of anthers c. 2.5 mm below corolla throat; filaments filiform, c. 1 mm long, white, glabrous; anthers narrowly triangular, c. 2.1 × 0.4 mm. **Nectary** of 2 awl-shaped lobes, c. 0.6 mm high, glabrous. **Gynoecium** of 2 apocarpous ovaries united into a common style; ovaries pink, c. 1.5 mm high, pubescent; style c. 22 mm long, white, glabrous; style head green, columnar, c. 1.2 mm long. **Fruit** not seen.

Distribution. Native distribution unknown.

Ecology. Only known in cultivation.

Etymology. The specific epithet *obscura* reflects the lack of information available on the origins of this species.

Notes. This is a very distinctive species due to the corolla colour and narrow corolla lobes. It is diagnosed above against *Kopsia fruticosa* because that is the most familiar pink-flowered species but *K. obscura* is unlikely to be closely related to it. It is morphologically more similar to *Kopsia griffithii* but differs in the characters in the diagnosis.

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Fig. 1. *Kopsia obscura* D.J.Middleton. **A.** Habit. **B.** Flower. (Photos: D.J. Middleton)

References

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