

A New Species of *Aglaonema* Schott (Araceae) from Terengganu, Malaysia.

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Abstract

Aglaonema flemingianum is described as new from Terengganu State in Peninsular Malaysia. The new species is illustrated and fitted into a previously published key to the species of *Aglaonema*.

Introduction

Aglaonema Schott (Araceae) is a genus of about 22 species of rainforest herbs, several of which are much prized as ornamental foliage plants since they are often variegated in nature (Jervis, 1980). The genus occurs in Indochina and southwestern China (9 species), West Malesia (6 species) and Central Malesia (incl. Philippines; 6 species), with only one species, *A. marantifolium* Bl., extending into East Malesia. *Aglaonema* was revised by Nicolson (1969), who divided the genus into two sections based on vegetative architecture: Sect. *Chamaecaulon*, with creeping branched stems, very short leaf sheaths and cataphylls subtending each petiole, and Sect. *Aglaonema*, with erect stems, longer leaf sheaths and cataphylls rarely present among the petioles. The new species belongs to the latter group. Nicolson also discussed the great variability of several species, and their tendency to be rather poorly differentiated from one another at the extremes of their variation. This new plant, however, is vegetatively so distinct from others as to warrant recognition as a discrete species, though known only from a single collection.

***Aglaonema flemingianum* A. Hay sp. nov.**

Fig. 1.

Ab aliis speciebus *Aglaonematis* petiolo brevissimo omnino vaginato, vagina apice ligulata ad marginem membranacea, laminae nervis primariis numerosissimis superne impressis, inferne prominentibus, pistillis paucis differt.

TYPUS: Cult. Hort. Reg. Bot. Sydney (Acc. No. 940284) originally collected from Malaysia, Terengganu, Sekayu, Ayer Terjun, *Hay et al.* 9216 (NSW, holo).

Erect herb to c. 30 cm tall; stem 1–2 cm diam., internodes c. 1 cm long, dark green, smooth; leaves in a tight rosette, subtended by cataphylls only at the beginning of a sympodium module; cataphylls 2–3 becoming progressively elongate, up to c. 7 cm long; petiole c. 4 cm long, c. 4 mm wide at the apex, sheathing throughout its length and clasping the stem more or less throughout; wing of sheath 6–8 mm wide, not or hardly tapering distally, membranous, the very margin eventually (in oldest leaves) becoming dry, brown and scarious, the apex of each wing extending free for c. 1 cm and overlapping the lower part of the leaf blade; leaf blade ovate to narrowly ovate, to c. 22 cm by c. 8 cm, widest at the middle, mid-green, not glossy; apex of blade acute to rounded and very shortly (c. 5–8 mm) acuminate and mucronate for c. 2 mm, the base tapering and narrowly rounded; midrib basally c. 5 mm broad and distally tapering, flat and slightly raised on the adaxial side, distally becoming flush and then impressed in the distal quarter, abaxially conspicuously raised and rounded in cross-section; primary lateral veins numerous, c. 12 on each side of the midrib, inserted c. 5 mm apart in the basal part of the midrib, further up c. 1 cm apart and distally c. 2 cm apart, diverging at c. 30° and gradually curving towards the leaf apex before running into the margin, adaxially impressed, abaxially prominent; secondary (interprimary) venation parallel to primary and flush ab- and adaxially; higher order venation forming an inconspicuous tessellate reticulum between the primary and interprimary veins; inflorescences to 2 together; peduncle concealed among leaf bases at anthesis, later extending somewhat to be exposed for c. 2 cm, subtended by short blunt cataphylls; spathe pale green, c. 3 cm long, broadly ovate, held boat-shaped at anthesis, c. 1.5 cm wide, open almost to the base, convolute in the lower 4 mm, inconspicuously keeled along the abaxial midline, the apex obtuse, mucronate for c. 2 mm; spadix somewhat exceeding the spathe, 3–5 cm long, stipitate for c. 5 mm at anthesis (elongating slightly afterwards), the stipe mostly adnate to the spathe, free in the upper 2 mm; female zone free, a single whorl of pistils; ovaries subcylindric, c. 2 mm tall, 1 mm diam.; stigma discoid, cap-like, sessile, c. 2 mm diam.; male zone 2.5 cm long, 8 mm wide at base, tapering in the upper half to a blunt tip, at the base with a whorl of incompletely fertile stamens; stamens not ostensibly arranged into male flowers, close-packed, irregularly 4-lobed, c. 2 mm diam.; fruit unknown.

Distribution and habitat: Endemic to Peninsular Malaysia and known only from the type collection from Terengganu, on the floor of wet lowland rain forest on slopes.

Notes: *Aglaonema flemingianum* can be incorporated into Nicolson's (1969) key to *Aglaonema* species thus:



Figure 1. *Aglaonema flemingianum*. Hay et al. 9216. a, habit; b, inflorescence; c, inflorescence with part of spathe removed; d, pistils and stamens. Scale bar to a = 4.5 cm; b = 2 cm; c = 1.3 cm; d = 5 mm.

12. Venation differentiated into primary and secondary veins.
- 12a. Petiole about 1/5th the length of the blade, sheathing throughout; blade with 24 primary veins..... *A. flemingianum*
- 12b. Petiole generally about or more than half the length of the blade, sheathing for about 1/2 to 4/5th its length; blade with 4-10 primary veins. 13 etc. as Nicolson (1969).

Some difficulty may be experienced with lead 6 in that key however, since *A. flemingianum* falls rather between the two alternatives there, though it nevertheless matches the second alternative (spadix cylindrical; spathe elongate) better than it does the first (spadix clavate; spathe globose).

Insufficient material exists for the making, designation and distribution of isotypes. However, as soon as the plant from which the holotype was prepared flowers again, further material will be preserved for distribution to KEP, SING and other relevant herbaria.

The new species is named in grateful recognition of Conrad D. Fleming who has generously supported many expeditions by Araceae botanists working in tropical Asia.

Unlike many other *Aglaonema* species which are easily cultivated and fast growing, *A. flemingianum* is very slow-growing, but with very long-lived leaves. The dense rosette of almost sessile leaf blades may represent a useful feature for breeders of ornamental *Aglaonema* cultivars.

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References

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