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## A New Species of *Chirita* (Gesneriaceae) from Guangxi, China

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**ABSTRACT.** A new species from northern Guangxi, China, *Chirita longii* Z. Y. Li, is described.

**Key words:** China, *Chirita*, Gesneriaceae.

An early-flowering plant of *Chirita* Buchanan-Hamilton ex D. Don found in South China is here recognized as a new species. Most Chinese species in this genus bloom in spring, summer, or autumn; only *C. atropurpurea* W. T. Wang blooms in winter (February) (Wang et al., 1998). The new species was first collected and photographed by Long Guang-Ri in January 1992 in the karst region of Longan County of northern Guangxi. When he returned to this locality in February 1993 for further exploration, he found that the habitat had been entirely destroyed due to human activities. Unfortunately, this plant has not yet been rediscovered in the type locality or in adjacent regions (Long Guang-Ri, pers. comm., 1993, 1994, 1995).

***Chirita longii*** Z. Y. Li, sp. nov. TYPE: China. Guangxi: Longan Co., Qiaoban, Qinzhan, on cliff, alt. 350 m, 12 Jan. 1992, *Long Guang-Ri 91004* (holotype, PE). Figure 1.

A *C. tenuifolia* W. T. Wang foliis minoribus, laminis oblanceolatis, pedunculis brevioribus 1.2–2.3 cm longis, calyce 8–12 mm longo, corolla majore ca. 4.3 cm longa, stigmatis labio antico 2-fido differt.

Perennials, stemless. Rhizome obconic, to 25 × 14 mm, internodes inconspicuous. Leaves 3 to 8, crowded at apex of rhizome, opposite, petiolate; blades oblanceolate, 1.5–2.5 × 0.4–0.9 cm, herbaceous, upper surface dark green, paler beneath, both surfaces appressed white-puberulous, base decurrent, margin remotely undulate or undulate-crenate, apex acute to obtuse; lateral veins 3 pairs, inconspicuous; petioles 5–10 × 1–2.5 mm, velutinous. Inflorescence of 1 or 2 cymes from the axils of the crowded leaves, each with 1 flower; peduncles 12–23 mm, densely pubescent; bract 1, linear, 3–3.5 × 0.5 mm, both surfaces densely pubescent; pedicels 3–4 mm, densely pubescent. Calyx 5-parted from base, segments linear, unequal, 8–12 × 0.8–1.2 mm, outside densely pubescent, inside sparsely puberulous, margin entire, apex acumi-

nate. Corolla lilac purple, ca. 4.3 cm, outside sparsely puberulous, inside glabrous; tube ca. 2.7 cm, ca. 1 cm diam. at mouth; upper lip ca. 9 mm, 2-lobed, lobes suborbicular; lower lip ca. 16 mm, 3-lobed, each lobe oblong. Stamens 2; filaments narrowly linear, adnate for ca. 12 mm to corolla base, ca. 12 mm, geniculate above base, to 0.5 mm wide, 0.3 mm wide apically, upper part puberulous, lower glabrous; anthers elliptic, ca. 2.5 mm, glabrous. Staminodes 2, narrowly linear, adnate for ca. 14 mm to corolla base, ca. 2.5 mm, glabrous. Disc annular, ca. 0.6 mm, margin lobed, glabrous. Pistil ca. 23 mm, densely puberulous, ovary linear, ca. 8 × 0.8 mm; lower lobe of stigma obtrapezoid, 1.2 mm, 2-parted, each lobe oblong-lanceolate, ca. 0.9 mm. Fruit unknown.

**Habitat.** Growing on a limestone cliff at 350 m. Flowering occurs at least in January.

**Distribution.** Known only from the type locality at Zhan Qin, Qiaoban, the karst region of Longan County, Guangxi, China.

**Etymology.** This species is named in honor of Long Guang-Ri (1952–), a dendrologist at the Forestry Bureau of Liuzhou Prefecture of Guangxi.

The genus *Chirita* consists of about 140 species, distributed in subtropical and tropical Asia, ranging from northwestern India (Gujarat and Simla) eastward to eastern China (Taiwan, Taidong) and from central China (Gansu, Wenxian) southward to southern Indonesia (Lessersunda Islands), at 90–3200 m altitude (Wood, 1974; Wang et al., 1998). There are 102 species in China, 54 in Guangxi (Wang et al., 1998; Fang et al., 1999; present paper); most species discovered from the karst regions were found at the lower elevation. Following Clarke's subdivision (Clarke, 1883; Wood, 1974; Wang et al., 1990), *C. longii* Z. Y. Li is referred to *Chirita* sect. *Gibbosaccus* Clarke. It is closely allied to *C. tenuifolia* W. T. Wang (Wang, 1985; Wang et al., 1998), but differs from the latter in its smaller and thicker leaves, oblanceolate lamina (vs. elliptic or broadly elliptic), shorter peduncles (1.2–2.3 cm vs. ca. 5 cm), longer calyx (8–12 mm vs. ca. 4.8 mm), larger corolla (ca. 4.3 cm vs. ca. 2.8 cm),

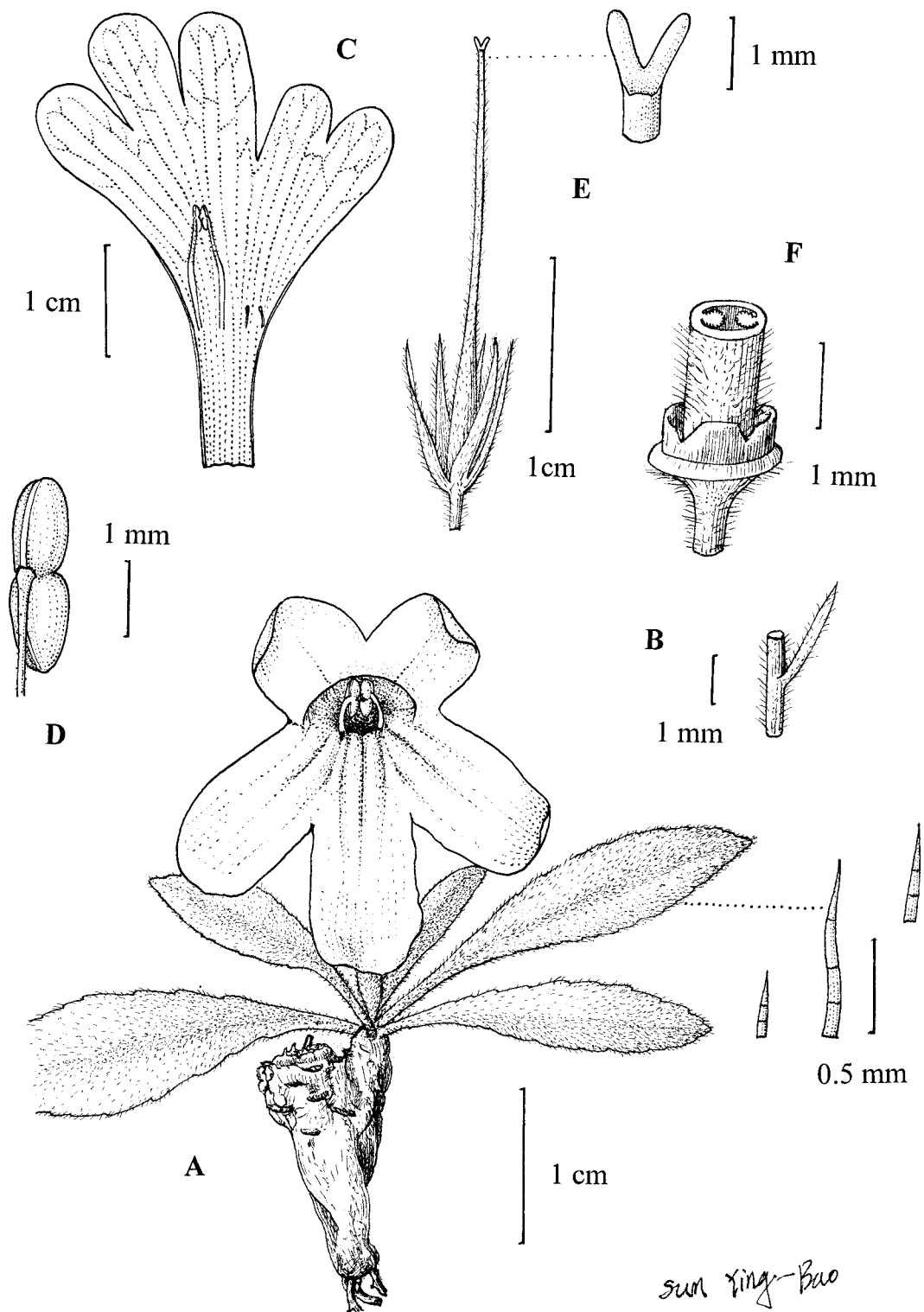


Figure 1. *Chirita longii* Z. Y. Li. —A. Flowering plant (with hairs enlarged). —B. Bract. —C. Opened corolla showing stamens and staminodes. —D. Anther. —E. Calyx and pistil (with stigma enlarged at right). —F. Disc and cross section of ovary. (Drawn from the holotype.)

obtrapezoid and 2-parted lower lip of stigmas (vs. ligulate, apex rounded, never divided), and flowering in January (vs. August).

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