

Accepted name: *Dendrochilum arachnites* Rchb.f., Gard. Chron. 1882(1): 256 (1882)

Subgenus – *Platyclinis*

Synonyms

Acoridium arachnites (Rchb.f.) Rolfe, Orchid Rev.: 219 (1904).

Origin in the Wild

Luzon, Leyte, Mindanao and Mindoro

Elevation in the Wild

500 - 2,600 metres

Habitat in the Wild

On Luzon this species has been collected on Mount Nangaoto, Mount Natoo, Mount Pangualitikai, Mount Pulog, Mount Santo Tomas, Pauai and Apunan in Benguet Province. In Ifugao Province on Mount Batwag and on Mount Polis. In Mountain Province it has been collected along the Bontoc Road. Within Pampanga Province it has only been collected on Mount Arayat and in Quezon Province on Mount Banahao. In Rizal Province this species has been collected on Montalban, Mount Susongdalaga and at San Isidro near Bosoboso.

On Mindoro this species has been collected on Mount Halcon.

On the Island of Leyte in the Visayas this species has been collected at Buenavista and Masaganap both near Jaro.

On Mindanao this species has been collected from Agusan del Norte on Mount Urdaneta and from Bukidnon Province on Mount Lipa. In Davao del Norte this plant has been collected on Mount Kampalili and in Davao del Sur on Mount Apo. In Misamis Province this plant has been collected on Mount Malindang.

This species is frequently found growing as an epiphyte in mossy forest and in bright light (Cootes 2001, Pedersen 1997).

The Plants Description

Pseudobulbs grow along an elongate rhizome and are spaced up to 5.0cm apart. Pseudobulbs are a fusiform, ellipsoid to ovoid shape, measure 1.7-5.5cm long and 0.3-1.5cm in diameter. Pseudobulbs are covered by 4-6 cataphylls while they are growing and soon disintegrate into immediately decaying fibres as the pseudobulbs mature. Leaves are petiolate; petioles measure 0.7-5.0cm long. Leaf blades are a lanceolate to elliptic or ovate shape and have acuminate apices. Leaf blades measure 4.5-21.5cm long and 2.5cm wide. The leaves are thin textured and have 7-9 distinct nerves.

The Inflorescence

Inflorescences are synanthous. Peduncles are suberect to curved and measure 4.2-23.0cm long. Rachises are nodding to pendent and measure 2.9-14.1cm long. Flowers alternate distichously and are spaced 3.0-5.0mm apart. There are one or no

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appressed non-floriferous bracts at the base of the rachis. The flowers open from the proximal or central section of the rachis.

The Flowers

The flower colour is a very pale yellow-green. Up to 30 flowers grow on an inflorescence (Cootes 2001). Henrik Pedersen wrote (1997) that the colour can be white to green or yellow and the labellum is greenish white or orange to pale pink. Sepals and petals spread widely are glabrous or have a few minute scattered trichomes. Dorsal sepals are a linear shape, narrowing gradually from the base to the acute or acuminate apex. Dorsal sepals measure 10.5-17.9mm long and 1.6-2.8mm wide. Dorsal sepals are three veined and have entire margins. Lateral sepals are sometimes carinate and a linear shape, narrowing gradually from the base to their acute or acuminate apices. Lateral sepals measure 11.6-18.9mm long and 1.7-3.4mm wide, are three veined and have entire margins. Petals are a narrowly lanceolate shape narrowing gradually from the base to their acute or acuminate apices. Petals measure 7.4-11.4mm long and 1.2-2.9mm wide, are three veined and have entire margins. Labella are easily versatile, pendent and entire, measure 2.7-5.0mm long and 1.1-2.8mm wide. Labella are an oblong shape with obtuse apices, are three veined and have margins. There are no ornaments but is often swollen basally. Columns are suberect, straight to slightly incurved and measure 2.0-4.5mm long. Apical hoods are prolonged into a rounded and slightly irregular to dentate apices which distinctly exceed the anther cap. Column feet are short. Stelidia grow upwards from the middle of the column and are shorter than the column apex. Stelidia are a falcately linear shape and have subacute apices. Rarely the stelidia are bidentate.

Herbarium Specimens

Holotype

Herbarium Reichenbach

Isotype

NA

Other herbarium specimens

Kew Botanical Gardens (K)

[Specimen 71187.000](#)

[Specimen 20279.000](#)

[Specimen 61477.000](#)

Scent

Yes and no, certain descriptions suggest a faint sweet or cinnamon scent. I haven't detected a scent on this species. Henrik Pedersen also wrote (1997) that the flower can be odourless. Oakes Ames wrote that the flower was odourless (Ames 1907).

Flowering Season

Flowering plants have been collected in the wild year round except during August. I have experienced cultivated plants flowering during spring in the northern hemisphere. Plants flower during the winter in Australia (Cootes et al 1995).

Cultivation

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This species is in cultivation around the world I have seen plants in Australia, the Europe, the USA, South Africa and the Philippines.

Similar Species

Dendrochilum merrillii (please see this page for the differences)
Dendrochilum odoratum

Other Information

Ames wrote that the leaves on cultivated plants depauperate making the leaves look different from how they would in the wild (Ames 1907).

This plant used to be often confused with *Dendrochilum wenzelii*. I have seen *Dendrochilum wenzelii* sold, pictured and grown as *Dendrochilum arachnites* 'red'. *Dendrochilum arachnites* does not have long sharp needle like leaves but defined pseudobulbs with wider paler green leaves. The flowers of *Dendrochilum arachnites* are bigger, have longer tepals and the flower colour is a very pale yellow-green. *Dendrochilum arachnites* 'red' form is nearly always *Dendrochilum wenzelii* or its allies and *Dendrochilum arachnites* 'yellow' is nearly always *Dendrochilum javierianum* or *wenzelii*. Philippine orchid nurseries originally exported *Dendrochilum javierianum* and *Dendrochilum wenzelii* incorrectly labelled as *Dendrochilum arachnites*, unfortunately even some herbarium specimens and plants in botanical institutions are now incorrectly labelled.

The epithet refers to the spider like appearance of the flowers.



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World Checklist of Selected Plant Families. 08 January 2009. The Board of Trustees of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Published on the Internet; <http://www.kew.org/wcsp/> accessed **08 January 2009**.