

**A NEW SPECIES OF RHODODENDRON
FROM NEW GUINEA (ERICACEAE)**

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The Star Mountains of New Guinea are situated at the geographic center of the Island of New Guinea extending on both sides of the Indonesian-Papua New Guinea border. Access to these mountains from either side of the border which divides the island is relatively difficult and as a result few collections have come from the area. A Dutch expedition traveled to the western Star Mountains in 1959, but ran into various difficulties and as a result did little collecting above 1500 m. In 1975 an expedition sponsored jointly by the Division of Botany, Lae, and the Rijksherbarium, Leiden, returned to the Star Mountains collecting extensively throughout the eastern half of the range. The results of this expedition include the first extensive collections of material from the higher altitudes within the Star Mountains. Material collected for the Division of Botany, Lae, by J. R. Croft and G. S. Hope while on the 1975 expedition is surprisingly rich in species of *Rhododendron*. I was asked by Mr. Croft to examine the Lae material prior to its distribution. The collections contain representatives of several poorly known species of the genus, at least one new plant record for Papua New Guinea, *Rhododendron rubrobracteatum* Sleumer, and the new taxon described below.

***Rhododendron capellae* Kores, sp. nov. — Fig. 1**

Frutex parvus c. 50 cm altus, terrestris, erectus. *Ramuli* teretes erecti, graciles, apicibus sparse lepidotis deorsum glabrescentibus. *Folia* inferne alternata, ad nodos ultimos aggregata, elliptica vel obovata, (0.8—) 1—1.5 × 0.3—0.6 cm, apice abrupte acuminata, basi acuta, coriacea, in vivo supra saturate viridia, subtus pallidiora, initio utrinque subdense lepidota, matura supra glabra et nitida, subtus lepidota (lepidibus centro incrassatis, zona marginali integris vel subirregulariter crenatis), margine incrassata, subcrenulata, haud vel vix revoluta, costa supra immersa, subtus obtuse prominente, nervis lateralibus inconspicuis; petioli graciles parum applanati, sublaxe lepidoti, 2—3 mm longi. *Flores* bini vel solitarii. *Perulae* exteriores ovato-acuminatae, subulatae vel apiculatae, 6—10 mm longae, extus sparse lepidotae et puberulae; perulae interiores multo latiores, obovatae, apiculatae et sparsissime lepidotae. *Pedicelli* graciles, lepidoti, 12—15 mm longi. *Calyx* membranaceus, 5-lobatus, extus dense lepidotus, lobis deltoideis, 0.5—1 mm longis. *Corolla* tubulosa, rubra, superne paullo dilata, 2.5—3 cm longa, extus (loborum marginibus exceptis) sparse lepidota, intus glabra, tubo cylindrico 1.7—2 cm longo, basi 3—4 mm diam., infra lobos 5—7 mm diam., subcurvato, lobis erecto-patentibus, late obovatis, 4—6 mm latis. *Stamina* 10, inaequilonga, 2—3 mm e tubo exserta, filamentis linearibus parte $\frac{1}{4}$ inferiore laxe pilosis, superne glabris, antheris obovatis, 1.5 × 1 mm. *Discus* inferne glaber, superne margine pilosus. *Ovarium* cylindraceo-conicum, dense albo-hirsutum et subdense lepidotum, c. 5 × 1.5 mm, in stylum attenuatum; stylus corollae tubum subaequans, basi sparsissime pilosus, ceterum glaber; stigma clavato-capitatum.

Small, terrestrial, erect, branching shrub, c. 0.5 m. *Branchlets* erect, slender, terete, 1—2 mm in diameter, tips laxly lepidote, glabrous below. *Leaves* scattered below, crowded above especially at the upper part of the new shoots, elliptical or obovate, apex abrupt-

acuminate, base acute, coriaceous, dark green above, lighter below, subdensely lepidote on both faces initially, glabrous and shiny above at maturity, persistently lepidote below (scales impressed with thickened centers, marginal zones entire and somewhat irregular), margin thickened and a little paler than the lamina, subcrenulate by impressed scales, slightly or not revolute, (0.8) 1—1.5 by 0.3—0.6 cm, midrib impressed above, raised beneath, nerves obscure; petiole rather slender, somewhat flattened, \pm laxly lepidote, 2—3 mm long. *Flowers* solitary or in twos. Outer *perulae* ovate-acuminate, subulate, or apiculate, laxly lepidote and very laxly pubescent, inner *perulae* broader, obovate, apiculate, and very laxly lepidote dorsally, 6—10 mm. *Pedicels* slender, lepidote, 12—15 mm long. *Calyx* membranous, 5-lobed, densely lepidote outside, lobes deltoid, 0.5—1 mm. *Corolla* tubular, slightly dilated at the limb, bright red, 2.5—3 cm long in all, laxly lepidote outside at the tube and lower parts of the lobes, glabrous inside; tube cylindrical, 1.7—2 cm long, 3—4 mm in diameter at the base, widened to 5—7 mm at the apex, slightly curved, lobes erectopate, broadly obovate, 4—6 mm wide. *Stamens* 10, nearly equal in length, extending to the middle of the corolla lobes; filaments linear, laxly hairy in the lower $\frac{1}{4}$ th, glabrous above; anthers obovate, 1.5 by 1 mm. *Disk* glabrous below, minutely pubescent at the upper margin. *Ovary* cylindrical-conical, densely covered with long white hairs and subdensely lepidote, c. 5 by 1.5 mm, tapering to a slender style which nearly attains the corolla tube in length; style with a few hairs at the base, glabrous above; stigma clavate-capitate.

Distribution: Papua New Guinea. W. Sepik Province: Star Mts., summit region of Mt. Capella, in subalpine shrubbery, 3800 m, fl. 29-V-1975, J. R. Croft & G. S. Hope LAE 68056 (holotype, LAE; duplicates sent to A, BRI, CANB, CANU, E, K, L).

This new species of *Rhododendron* would fit into the existing system of classification for the genus within Malesia proposed by Dr. H. Sleumer in 'Flora Malesiana' as a member of the subsection *Pseudovireya*. Under Sleumer's system of classification for the subsection the new species would, by virtue of the fact that the ovary is both hairy and lepidote, key out to *R. vinkii* Sleumer, Fl. Mal. I, 6 (1966): 493—494 (once collected in the hinterland of Fak-Fak, West New Guinea). The new species, however, can be distinguished from *R. vinkii* by its much smaller leaves, shorter, laxly lepidote petioles, hairless corolla, and almost entirely glabrous style. Phyletically, this new taxon might better be assigned a position closer to that of *R. pulleanum* Koord., Fl. Mal. I, 6 (1966): 483—484. Vegetatively, the two taxa appear to be very similar differing only in the degree to which the branchlets become verruculose; in *R. pulleanum*, this feature is much more pronounced. Floristically, the new species can be distinguished from *R. pulleanum* by its longer, more subulate outer *perulae* and ovary both densely hairy and subdensely lepidote.

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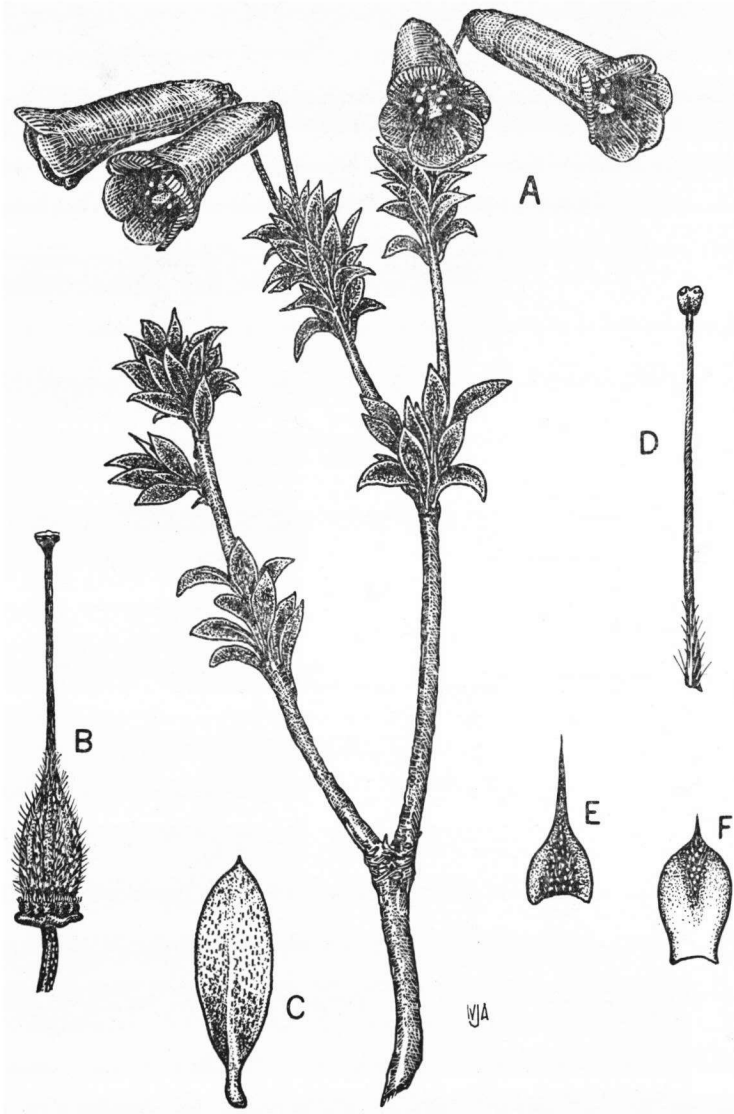


Fig. 1. *Rhododendron capellae* Kores. a. Flowering branchlet, $\times 1$; b. ovary and style, $\times 3$; c. single leaf, $\times 3$; d. stamen, $\times 3$; e. outer perianth, $\times 3$; f. inner perianth, $\times 3$ (J. R. Croft & G. S. Hope, LAE 68056).