
The diversity of Zingiberaceae in Louang Prabang Province, Lao PDR

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Résumé

A study of the diversity of the Zingiberaceae in Louang Prabang Province, northern Laos, was conducted from 2010 to 2014. The field work was carried out in cooperation between Pha Tad Ke Botanical Garden, Singapore Botanic Gardens and Queen Sirikit Botanic Garden. One hundred and twenty two specimens were collected from diverse habitats, namely, semi-evergreen forest, mixed deciduous forest, dipterocarp forest, grassland resulting from shifting cultivation, limestone and along roadsides. Forty eight species in 10 genera have been identified, Zingiber being the most commonly represented with 12 species, followed by Alpinia and Curcuma with 7 species. Etlingera and Gagnepainia were the least represented with 1 species each. Among these, one species, Curcuma corniculata Škorničk, was endemic to Louang Prabang, 15 species were new records for Laos and two were exotic, namely Etlingera elatior (Jack) R.M. Sm. and Alpinia purpurata (Vieill.) K. Schum. which were introduced long ago for ornamental purposes. Twenty six species were well known to villagers and cultivated by them for medicinal purposes. Zingiber officinale and Alpinia galanga were also cultivated as spices. All specimens were identified, and dried herbarium specimens were prepared. The herbarium specimens were deposited at Pha Tad Ke Botanical Garden and duplicates were sent to the National Herbarium of Laos in Vientiane. Material of each species was planted in the living collection at Pha Tad Ke Botanical Garden for ex-situ conservation and for further studies such as plant morphology, pollen morphology and molecular systematics. A database of horticultural, botanical and ethno-botanical information was started using previously published taxonomic studies and some on-line photographs of type specimens in the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle (P), Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh (E) and Royal Botanic Gardens Kew (K). For further study more field collections and supporting funds will be needed.

Mots-Clés: Keywords: Diversity of Zingiberaceae, Louang Prabang, Laos

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