

**AGLAONEMA MODESTUM SCHOTT EX ENGLER (ARACEAE) – A NEW
ANGIOSPERMIC RECORD FOR BANGLADESH**

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Abstract

Aglaonema modestum Schott ex Engler of the family Araceae have been described and reported here for the first time from Bangladesh. An updated nomenclature, important synonym, illustrated description, flowering and fruiting time, specimen citation, ecology and geographical distribution have been provided.

Aglaonema Schott is a genus of the family Araceae, distributed in tropical Asia, Malay Archipelago and Papuasias (Mayo *et al.* 1997). Nicolson (1969) revised the genus *Aglaonema* on world basis by recognizing 21 species and 2 sections. This genus is represented in Bangladesh by one species, namely *A. hookerianum* Schott (Hooker 1893, Prain 1903). It is distributed in the greater districts of Chittagong, Chittagong Hill Tracts and Sylhet.

Recently, a specimen of *Aglaonema* was collected from Adampur forest beat Kamalgonj Thana of Moulvi Bazar district in the month of April, 2004. The beat area is characterized by the presence of evergreen trees with an admixture of deciduous species and a huge number of undergrowth on a hilly landscape. After critical study the plant has been identified as *A. modestum* Schott ex Engler following the description and illustration given by Engler (1915) and Nicolson (1969).

This species was not reported before from Bangladesh in the relevant literature of this region, viz., Hooker (1893), Prain (1903), Heinig (1925), Calder *et al.* (1926), Sinclair (1955), Huq and Khan (1984), Khan *et al.* (1994), Mia and Khan (1995), Rahman and Uddin (1997), Uddin *et al.* (1998), Uddin and Rahman (1999), Rashid *et al.* (2000), Ara (2001), Khan and Huq (2001) and Rahman (2004). Therefore, it is recorded here for the first time from Bangladesh.

A detailed taxonomic description and illustration of the plant has been prepared with the help of fresh specimen, now maintained and preserved at the Bangladesh National Herbarium (DACB).

Aglaonema modestum Schott ex Engler, Engl. in DC. Mon. Phan. 2: 442 (1879). Engler, in Engler, Pflanzenr. 64 (IV. 23 Dc): 29-30 (1915); Nicolson, Smithsonian Contr. Bot. 1: 26-28 (1969). **(Fig. 1)**

Stem dark green, erect, 32 cm tall, 2 cm thick, internodes 0.4 – 3 cm long. Petiole 24 cm long, upper portion flattened. Sheaths broad and membranous, 11 cm long. Leaf blade entire, ovate to elliptic or lanceolate to narrowly elliptic, 27 cm long, 10 cm wide, base often unequal, obtuse to rounded, apex gradually long acuminate (typically 2 – 3.5 cm from point of 1 cm blade width to apex), variegation none, venation weakly to strongly differentiated into 4 – 6 primary lateral veins diverging from the midrib. Peduncles 3 together, 12 cm long, usually more than half as long as the petiole. Spathe ovate, erect, no differentiated into a tube and blade, convolute at base, open above, 4 cm long, 1.5 cm wide, green, turning yellow with age. Stipe none. Spadix thin-cylindric, 2.8 cm

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long, pistillate portion 0.3 cm long, attached to spathe, pistils 9; staminate portion 2.5 long, 0.5 cm thick. Stamens free, filaments usually distinct. Ovary subglobose, 1-locular, ovule 1, anatropous, on basal placentation, style short, stigma broad, discoid. Fruits orange, 2 – 3 cm long, 1.0 – 1.3 cm thick.

Flowering and fruiting: March – April.

Specimen examined: **Maulvi Bazar** district: Adampur forest, Kalengi hill, 16.04.2004, Hosne Ara HA 717 (DACB); Pavel Partha 650 (JUH).

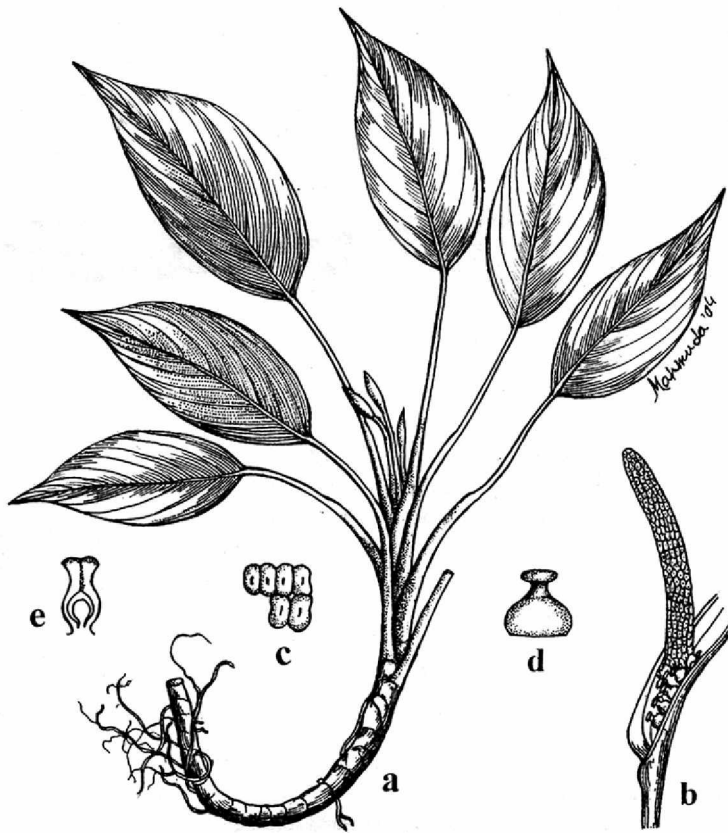


Fig. 1. *Aglaonema modestum* Schott *ex* Engler. (a) habit sketch of a flowering plant ($\times 0.25$), (b) spadix ($\times 2$), (c) front view of male flower ($\times 5$), (d) gynoecium ($\times 5$), (e) longitudinal section of gynoecium ($\times 5$).

Ecology: Grows on shady hill slope adjacent to chhara in deep forest.

Distribution: Southern China, Northern Laos and Northern Thailand.

Note: *Aglaonema modestum* Schott *ex* Engler is closely related to *A. hookerianum* Schott, but differs from the latter in having the spadix distinctly shorter than the spathe (by more than 1 cm) and shorter peduncles. The leaves of *A. modestum* are noticeably long acuminate (acumen over 2.5 cm long from the point of 1 cm blade width to apex).

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