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brief communication

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a new record for Nepal

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Malaxis biaurita (Lindley) Kuntze (Orchidaceae): a new record for Nepal

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Malaxis biaurita (Lindley) Kuntze (Orchidaceae) has been reported for the first time in Nepal. The species occurs in the subtropical forest at an elevation of 1400 meters. The identifying characters are purple-red flowers, apically entire, obtuse labellum. Detailed description, illustration and relevant notes are provided.

Key words: orchids, taxonomy, distribution

The genus *Malaxis* was established by O Swartz in 1788. The genus comprises about 300 species worldwide, found primarily in tropical and subtropical regions of South East Asia with few species in temperate regions (Pearce and Cribb 2002). *Malaxis biaurita* (Lindley) Kuntze is distributed in the subtropical region of the Andaman Islands (Pradhan 1979). It is also reported in the north-west Himalaya of India (Deva 1982).

Genus *Malaxis* is represented by ten species in Nepal (Rajbhandari and Dahal 2004). *Malaxis biaurita* had not been previously reported from Nepal (Hara et al. 1978; Banerji and Pradhan 1984; Press et al. 2000; DPR 2001; Rajbhandari and Dahal 2004; Rajbhandari and Baral 2010). There is no record of this species in the National Herbarium, Kathmandu (KATH) or Tribhuvan University Central Herbarium (TUCH). Here we report a new record of *Malaxis biaurita* (Lindley) Kuntze for Nepal. The first author collected it in Lamidanda, Makwanpur District, Narayani Zone (Central Nepal) at an altitude of 1400 meter and deposited it at KATH.

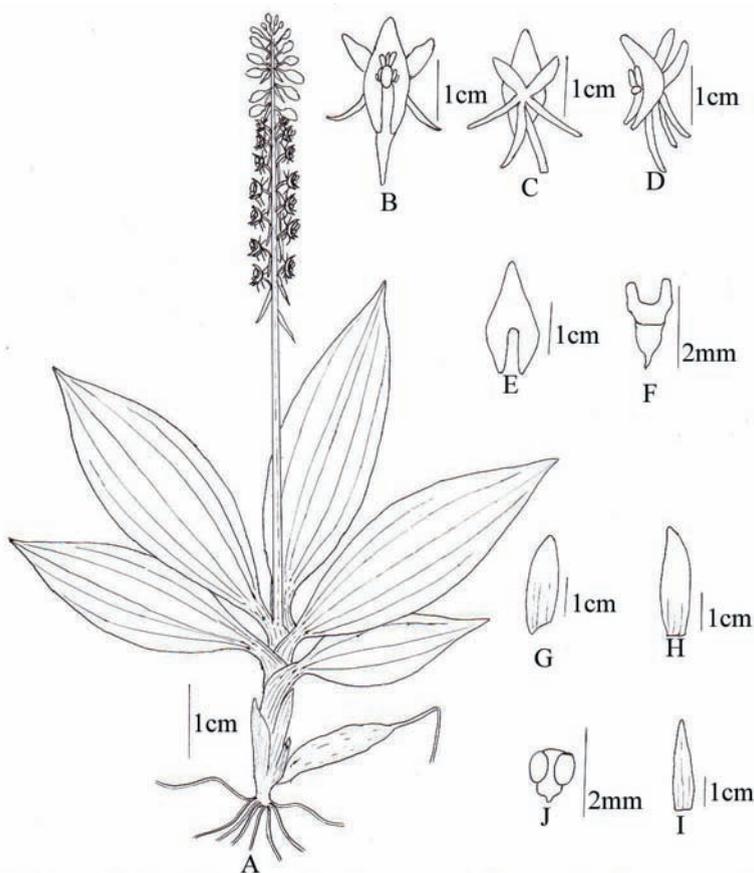
Malaxis biaurita (Lindley) Kuntze, Gen. Pl. 2: 673. 1891.
Microstylis biaurita Lindley, Gen. Sp. Orchid. Pl. 20. 1830.
Herb, terrestrial, up to 40 cm tall. **Stem:** fleshy, cylindrical, 2–2.5 cm, enclosed in leaf sheaths. **Leaves:** ascending; petiole sheath-like, 1.5–3 cm, clasping; leafblade ovate, oblong-ovate, or sub-elliptic, 6–12×1.8–4.5 cm, base contracted into a stalk, apex acute or acuminate. **Scape:** erect, 14–21 cm, wingless; raceme 8–10 cm, 20–30 laxly flowered. **Floral bracts:** reflexed, 4.5–6 mm, narrowly lanceolate, apex acuminate. Pedicel and ovary 4–5 mm. **Flowers:** purplish red, 8 mm across. **Abaxial sepal:** oblong-lanceolate, 5–5.5×1.5–2 mm, both margins revolute, apex obtuse; **lateral sepals:** narrowly oblong-ovate, oblique, 6×1.5–2 mm, apex obtuse. **Petals:** narrowly linear, 5×0.2 mm, apex blunt. **Labellum:** ovate-lanceolate in outline, 7 mm, both ends tapering, base with two falcate auricles, apex obtuse. **Column:** 1 mm thick.

Flowering: July.



Figure 1. *Malaxis biaurita* habit

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Habitat: Cool growing terrestrial on humus rich sandy slopes, likes partial shade, occurs in the subtropical forest margins at an altitude of 1400 meters.

Occurrence: Central Nepal, Narayani Zone, Makwanpur District, Lamidanda, 25 July 2007, Raskoti 204 (KATH).

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Figure 2 (top on the left). A. Habit of the plant; B. Front view of flower; C. Back view of flower; D. Side view of flower; E. Labellum; F. Column; G. Dorsal sepal; H. Lateral sepal; I. Petal; J. Anther. Sections of the figure (A to J) are not in the same scale.

Figure 3 (left). Close up view of the flower with sepals, petals, lip and column visible.