

TWO NEW SPECIES OF GINGER DISCOVERED IN NAGALAND

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Biodiversity, Ecology, and Wildlife Related Issues

Zingiber perenense, left, was found growing in moist areas, while Zingiber dimapurens was collected from a forest.

Scientists from the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) have discovered two new species of Zingiber, commonly referred to as ginger, in Nagaland. While *Zingiber perenense* has been discovered from the Peren district of Nagaland, *Zingiber dimapurens* was found in the Dimapur district of the State.

Details of both discoveries were published in two peer-reviewed journals earlier this year. Of the two species, *Zingiber dimapurens* is taller in size, with leafy shoots measuring 90-120 cm high, whereas the leafy shoots of *Zingiber perenense* reach up to 70 cm in height.

The type specimens of *Zingiber perenense* were collected in September 2017, when botanists were working on the ‘State flora of Nagaland’ in the Peren district. “The plant was found growing in moist shady places on the bank of a small steam in the hilly terrain forest of the Tesen village under the Peren subdivision,” the publication authored by four botanists said.

Collection of specimen

The specimen of *Zingiber dimapurens* was collected in October 2016 from the Hekese forest under the Medziphema subdivision. Some rhizomes of this plant collected along with field data were planted in the Botanical Survey of India’s Eastern Regional Centre garden in Shillong, where itself they began flowering in June 2018.

According to Dilip Kumar Roy, who has contributed to both the publications, the genus Zingiber has 141 species distributed throughout Asia, Australia and the South Pacific, with its centre of diversity in Southeast Asia. “More than 20 species have been found in northeastern India. Over the past few years, more than half a dozen species have been discovered from different States of northeast India only,” Dr. Roy said.

Nripemo Odyou, another scientist with the BSI, said that the high diversity of ginger species in the region reveals that the climate is conducive for the growth of the genus.

More studies are required to ascertain the medicinal properties of the newly discovered species,” Dr. Odyou said.

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