

Usually solitary, rarely with basal branches, stilt-rooted, stem greyish brown, erect, 1.8cm diam., robust, erect, to 4.5m; internodes 4-5cm, leaves abscissing, large 100cm x 50cm, pinnate with two forms of leaflets, few (six pairs) broadly flaring distally or numerous (15-17 pairs) narrowly parallel-sided, petiole 20cm, leaf sheath 29cm, green with brown indumentum; often persisting in inflorescence thereby remaining interfoliar, rachillae stout, succulent, nine to ten branches, to 45cm long with 30cm peduncle; flowers widely spaced, relatively large; fruit (only one seen to date), unripe yellow, pink, like *bicornis* but eccentric, with flat top, not two-lobed.

This tantalising taxon needs to be described and recorded even if somewhat incompletely, in view of its rarity; we have only found less than ten plants in one threatened locality. Although it is within a Forest Reserve, adjacent felling and land schemes may affect its survival. It grows sympatrically, with the common *I. bicornis* and the new *I. wallichiana* var. *rosea*. The very large leaves are a third to twice the size of the adjacent *I. bicornis*, usually trapezoidal, but another pinnate form has been seen with parallel-sided leaflets. The inflorescences are signally different, lingering (perhaps because of size) among the leaf sheaths, which are of the abscissing type, leaving clean scars, but are more fibrous, and appear to persist in support of the stout but gangling rachillae. The unique fruit collected was somewhat like a dirty tooth, irregular but not bigibbous. This sampling is incomplete, but other characteristics set this taxon apart not only from *I. bicornis* and *I. polymorpha* but also from *I. belumensis*.

The population is certainly not sterile, as seedlings and the one tantalisingly solitary fruit collected prove. It is indeed an imposing erect taxon, and the epithet, which means prime (in Malay), alludes at attributes which a leader *primus inter pares*, should have.

Distribution: Perak; damp hill slopes, alt. 500m.

Type: Perak: Kroh, 1992, C.K. Lim H 1125, (holotype KEP)

Reference Collections:-

Perak, Kroh, H 1507 SING; C.K. Lim H 1254, H 1366, H 1412, H 1572 PSM Collection.

16. *Iguanura mirabilis* C.K. Lim sp. nov.

A ceteris speciebus malaysianis foliis integris valde plicatis, pedunculo brevi, fructibus curvatis differt. Typus: Terengganu: Ulu Setiu, 1993, C.K. Lim H 1448 (holotypus KEP).

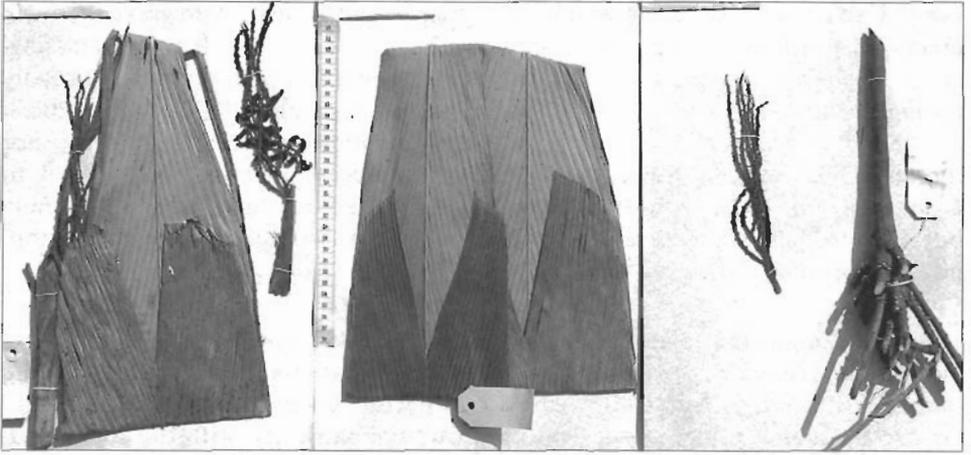


Plate 36 *I. mirabilis*: Type specimen: Terengganu: Ulu Setiu. 1993, C.K.Lim H1448 (KEP)



Plate 37 *I. mirabilis*: Rachillae (three to nine branched) with purple indumentum; fruit curved.

Caespitose, stilt-rooted, with basal branches, dominant stems to 3m, 1-2cm diam., internodes 2-3cm, leaves eight to ten at crown, held stiffly with short petioles 3cm or less, abscissing, entire, lamina strongly plicate, 85cm x 28cm, with deep (23cm) apical cleft, often with blunt truncated apical edges sometimes attenuated; leaf sheath 14cm; inflorescence among or below sheath, stout, horizontal or erect, with purple indumentum, 5 or more branches sometimes sub-branching, rachillae to 15cm or more, 4-6mm thick peduncle up to 10cm, 10mm x 5mm, often within sheath; buds prominent pink, with red indumentum, male flowers large 5mm wide when open, with pinkish sepals not examined in detail. Fruit curved (like *I. polymorpha*, also in size), white, ripening cherry red; seed not ridged.

This is indeed a spectacular new species, quite unlike any others within the genus in Peninsular Malaysia. The plicate leaves are stiff, with deep apical clefts, and often blunt at the top edges (oar-shaped), sometimes with extended tips. The leaves absciss cleanly and are entire. The taxon is clearly distinct from the *polymorpha* complex, although the curved fruit resemble those of *I. polymorpha*, and has been placed (together with *I. parvula*) for convenience with the trapezoidal leaflet members, under the abscissing group.

A small specimen with inflorescence had been collected earlier from the same area but remained unidentified at Kew (*J. Dransfield 5145*); but no other collections had previously been deposited in KEP or SING. In Sarawak, two species (*I. sandariana* and *I. elegans*) may seem to have affinities, their leaves also being plicate and entire (although lobed forms have recently been found with variable apical clefts); however, these are solitary in habit, and the inflorescence and fruit are quite different, globose, with seeds that are ribbed or ridged, features not observed in Peninsular taxa of *Iguanura*. The new species has been a wonderful culmination for this stage of our palm studies, and the name *I. mirabilis* is surely appropriate.

Distribution: Terengganu, where it is limited but not uncommon in particular flood-prone swamp forests, sharing the habitat with *I. humilis*.

Type: Terengganu: Ulu Setiu, 1993, *C.K. Lim H 1448* (holotype KEP)

Reference Collections:-

Terengganu, Ulu Setiu, *J. Dransfield 5145 K*; *H 1518 SING*; *C.K. Lim H 1300, H 1379 KEP*; *H 1326, H 1418, H 1474, H 1475 PSM Collection*.



Plate 38 *I. mirabilis*: Caespitose, leaves entire, strongly plicate.