

PINANGA WATANAIANA

***Pinanga watanaiana* C. K. Lim sp. nov.**

P. badia affinis sed foliis maculatis variegatis et inflorescentiis viridis vel corallinis differt. Typus: Thailand, Phuket, Khao Pra Taew, 1979 J. Dransfield & C. Boonab, JD5424/BKF70343 (holotypus BKF, isotypus K)

Caespitose and clumping palmlet, stems greenish brown to 2.5 m, 1.5 cm diameter, with prominent internodal scars at 8–10 cm, leaves 6–8 in crown, pinnate (undivided in juveniles) to 70 cm, with 8–9 (to 13) pairs of leaflets, broader for the apicals, usually strikingly mottled (more so than in certain forms of *P. disticha*), sheaths 27 cm, yellow to brown forming crownshaft, inflorescences infrafoliar, 2–3 on nodes below, deflexed, sometimes erect rachillae green to coral red (distinct in color and usually longer than in *P. badia*) 2–4 branched 12–20 cm, peduncle to 3.5 cm, flowers not examined, fruit distichous, to 20 pairs, ovoid, beaked, 1 × 1.5 cm, green ripening scarlet to black.

Distribution: Endemic to Phuket. Habitat: hill forest, at 150 m and above, population localized, probably rare and endangered.

Type: Thailand, Phuket, Khao Pra Taew, 1979 J. Dransfield & C. Boonab, JD5424/BKF70343 (holotype BKF, isotype K).

Other specimens seen: Phuket, Khao Pra Taew, 1986, Sumawong (& Smith?) 9 (K), 1994 C.K. Lim H1614 (KEP), H1720, H1730 (PSM Collection), 1997, C.K. Lim H1994 (PSM Collection).

The clustering species is immediately recognizable from *P. badia* not only by the light-green mottle on the dark-green leaves, lighter on the underside, but also by the less numerous leaflets, and the yellow crownshaft, (see Figs. 5 and 6). The rachillae are normally green to coral, vs. yellow for *P. badia*, and the drupes green to scarlet and black, those of *P. badia* being brownish pink turning black.

This taxon has only been collected on a few occasions, but had been tentatively identified as probably related to *P. fruticans*, an elusive Ridley species, which he confused with specimens of *P. kuhlii*, his own original collection being most likely *P. scortechinii*. The new *Pinanga* has been named after Watana Sumawong, the eminent palm enthusiast and pioneer collector of Bangkok, who had himself collected it in 1986 at the same location. It has so far not been found elsewhere, and could be endangered because of its horticultural appeal.

cent surge of efforts has been promoted by his sponsor Kampon Tansacha, with important field coverage by his collector Poonsak Vatcharakorn, providing fresh material for research and for horticultural development. It would indeed be useful for collection notes and data to be kept and made available, especially in areas threatened by deforestation. The new species was collected in Satun, where the Thale Ban Reserve offers scope for more botanical and conservation research; an estimate of its population would be useful. Coincidentally, over the last two years, as a new record for Malaysia, it has also been discovered near the border in the Mata Ayer Forest Reserve in Perlis, where so far very few clusters have been found. The palm has been observed to fruit when at less than 1.5 m height, and it is indeed most distinctive in the color of its drupes, ripening brownish pink, turning to black, with yellow rachillae.