

Uraria balansae (Fabaceae), a new record from northern Laos

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ABSTRACT. *Uraria balansae* Schindl., is reported here as a new record from northern Laos. A description, specimen examined, distribution, ecology, phenology, notes and photographs are provided.

KEYWORDS: botanical exploration, flora, Lao PDR, Leguminosae-Papilionoideae, Phongsali

INTRODUCTION

The genus *Uraria* Desv., belonging to subfamily Papilionoideae of family Fabaceae, comprises approximately 24 species, mainly distributed in the Old World tropics from India to Indo-China (POWO, 2025). It is characterised by long and narrow calyx lobes and pods that are transversely divided into rounded segments, each folded over the other (Tokaew & Chantaranonthai, 2024). In Laos, 12 species were previously recorded in the Checklist of the Vascular Plants of Laos (Newman *et al.*, 2007; <https://padme.rbge.org.uk/laos/checklist>).

During a botanical exploration in Phongsali province, northern Laos, in 2019, conducted in collaboration with Pha Tad Ke Botanical Garden and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, specimens of *U. balansae* Schindl. were collected from Boun Tai district. These specimens were identified using the key to species provided by Tokaew and Chantaranonthai (2024). After consulting relevant literature, including the checklist of Laos (Newman *et al.*, 2007; Tokaew *et al.*, 2020; Tokaew & Chantaranonthai, 2024), *U. balansae* is here reported as a new record for the Flora of Laos.

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TAXONOMIC TREATMENT

Uraria balansae Schindl., Bot. Jahrb. Syst. 54: 53. 1916; Tokaew *et al.*, Thai Forest Bull., Bot. 48(1): 52, f. 1A & map 1. 2020; Tokaew & Chantar., Thai J. Bot. 16(1): 7. 2024. Type: Vietnam, Tonkin, Mocha, 29 Sept. 1891, *Balansa 4448* (lectotype P [P02142542!], designated by Tokaew *et al.* (2020); isolectotype P [P02142543!]). Fig. 1.

Erect or unbranched subshrub, 30–50 cm tall. *Leaves* 3-foliolate; petioles 5–15 cm long, pubescent; stipules deltoid, acuminate, *ca.* 15 × 8 mm. *Leaflets* thinly coriaceous, lanceolate, 10–23 × 2–6 cm, base obtuse, apex acuminate, margin entire, upper surface scabrous, lower surface pubescent; petiolules 4–5 mm long; stipels narrowly lanceolate, acuminate, *ca.* 8 × 1 mm. *Inflorescences* racemose, terminal, erect, 5–15 cm long; peduncle 2–5 cm long, pubescent. *Flowers* densely arranged, 30–50-flowered; bracts lanceolate, 17–23 × 2–6 mm, pubescent, pink to purple, caducous; pedicels 15–18 mm long, to 20 mm at maturity, dark purple, with bulbous-based straight hairs and sparse straight hairs. *Calyx* with bulbous-based straight hairs and sparse straight hairs, purple; tube 1.5–2 mm long, with 5 lobes; upper lobes 3, *ca.* 4 mm long, deltoid, with an acuminate apex, bulbous-based straight hairs; lower lobes 2, 4–5 mm long, deltoid, with an acuminate apex, bulbous-based straight hairs. *Corolla* purple, glabrous; standard orbicular or obovate, 9–10 × 7–8 mm, claw *ca.* 2 mm long, base auriculate;

wings falcate-oblong, 5–6 × *ca.* 2 mm, claw *ca.* 1 mm long, adhering to keel; keels 6–8 × *ca.* 3 mm, obtuse, slightly incurved, claw *ca.* 2 mm long. *Ovary* with 6–7 ovules, sparsely tiny straight hairs; pistil 10–12 mm long. *Pods* not seen.

Laos.— Phongsali [Boun Tai, Ban Sing Sai, 17 Sept. 2019, *ca.* 660 m alt., 21°25'35.795"N 101°55'31.323"E, *Thammarong, Rakarcha, Phaosrichai, Phetlamphun & Xaiyalath L19-416* (HNL, QBG)].

Distribution.— Thailand, Laos, Vietnam.

Ecology and Phenology.— Roadsides in hill evergreen forest at *ca.* 660 m elevation. Flowering: September.

Notes.— *Uraria balansae* resembles *U. acuminata* Kurz but can be distinguished by its 3 lanceolate leaflets (vs (3–)5–9 in *U. acuminata*), being pubescent on the lower surface of leaflets (vs scabrous), longer pedicels up to 20 mm long at maturity (vs up to 10 mm) and ovary with 6–7 ovules (vs 2–5).

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FIGURE 1. *Uraria balansae*: A–B. habit; C. close up of inflorescence. Photos by W. Thammarong.

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