



## ***Bulbophyllum lobbii* Lindl. (Orchidaceae): A New Orchid Record for the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India**

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### Abstract

### Original Research Article

*Bulbophyllum lobbii* Lindl., a small lithophytic or epiphytic angiosperm of the Orchidaceae family, has been documented for the first time on Narcondam Island. This discovery signifies the initial documented report of this orchid species in the A&N Islands. The report provides a concise morphological elucidation, supporting color photographs for identification and a plants location map to enable future research and conservation efforts.

**Keywords:** Angiosperm, Orchidaceae, First report, Narcondam Island.

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### INTRODUCTION:

*Bulbophyllum* Thouars, a member of the family Orchidaceae, is distributed across pantropical regions. According to Vermeulen et al. (2014), it ranks among the largest genera in the plant kingdom, comprising around 2,200 species. It grows predominantly in the wet tropical biome. The Indian representation of the genus includes more than 121 species (Misra, 2019). According to the studies by Das & Sivaperuman (2023), Alappatt (2018), Karthigeyan et al. (2014) and Pandey & Diwakar (2008), only 17 species of *Bulbophyllum* Thouars have been documented so far from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

During floristic explorations in Narcondam Island Wildlife Sanctuary, the authors collected a specimen belonging to the genus *Bulbophyllum* from hill top forest (Fig.1) in its flowering phase. Following a critical morphological study, the orchid

was conclusively identified as *Bulbophyllum lobbii* Lindl., commonly known as Lobb's bulbophyllum. A review of major botanical studies conducted in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands including those by Das & Sivaperuman (2023), Alappatt (2018), Prasad et al. (2009), Pandey & Diwakar (2008) Karthigeyan et al. (2014), Shina (1999), Hajra et al. (1999) and Lakshminarasimhan & Rao (1996) found no previous record of this species. Therefore, it is confirmed as a new report to the flora of the A&N Islands. A complete taxonomic description, phenological data, distribution details and a diagnostic photograph to aid in field identification. Supporting voucher specimens are deposited at the herbarium in Port Blair.

### TAXONOMIC TREATMENT:

*Bulbophyllum lobbii* Lindl., Edwards's Bot. Reg. 33: t. 29. 1847, *Phyllorkis lobbii* (Lindl.) Kuntze, Revis.



Gen. Pl. 2: 677. 1891, *Sarcobodium lobbii* (Lindl.) Beer, Prakt. Stud. Orchid. 306. 1854, *Sarcopodium lobbii* (Lindl.) Lindl. & Paxton, Paxton's Fl. Gard. 1: 155. 1850.

The taxonomic description of *Bulbophyllum lobbii* is based on examination of fresh materials collected from the field and augmented by a review of the characters detailed in Chowlu et al. (2013) and Adit et al. (2019).

The plant is a lithophytic or epiphytic herb, typically reaching 40 to 50 cm in length. It features a sturdy, creeping rhizome measuring between 0.5–0.8 cm in diameter. The pseudobulbs are ovoid to cylindrical in shape, about 4–6 cm long, with their bases enveloped by persistent fibrous sheaths. Each pseudobulb bears a single, solitary leaf. The leaf blade is oblong with entire margins and displays prominent parallel venation. It measures 10–16 cm in length and 2–4 cm in width. The apex is acute, while the base is decurrent, tapering into a distinct petiole that is about 1.5–3 cm long. The inflorescence emerges from the rhizome and consists of a single, pedicellate flower, 10–14 cm long. The sepals are sub-equal, oblong-lanceolate and measure 3–5 cm in length by 1–1.2 cm in width. They are characterized by an acute apex, a concave base and a slightly falcate (sickle-shaped) form. The petals are oblong with an acute tip, ranging from 2.5–4 cm long and 0.8–1 cm wide. The overall coloration of the flower is creamish-yellow, adorned with faint longitudinal stripes of maroon. The labellum (lip) is broadly ovate with an obtuse tip, measuring 0.8–1.2 cm in length and 1–1.2 cm in width. The column is slightly recurved, sessile and about 0.8 cm long. The anther cap is yellow, enclosing two cream-yellow pollinia (Fig. 2).

### Flowering & Fruiting:

March–April.

### Habitat:

*Bulbophyllum lobbii* is an herbaceous annual plant. On Narcondam Island, its habitat was observed to be on rocky substrates within the hilly, tropical evergreen rainforest.

### Distribution:

According to Chowlu et al. (2013), Adit et al. (2019), POWO (2026), the native range of *Bulbophyllum lobbii* is primarily in the wet tropical regions of Southeast Asia, including India (Assam), Borneo, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Sumatra, Singapore, Jawa, Lesser Sunda Island, Thailand, Vietnam and now reported from Andaman Islands.

### Specimens examined:

India: Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Narcondam Island, 04<sup>th</sup> March 2020, *Apurba Kumar Das* 001753.

### Location:

Latitude: 13°26'50.25"N, Longitude: 94°15'44.29"E, Altitude: 610 m MSL.

### Conservation Status:

While *Bulbophyllum lobbii* Lindl., may be secure across its wider geographical range, its newly discovered population on Narcondam Island is intrinsically vulnerable due to extreme isolation, a minute area of occupancy and potential environmental threats. A precautionary approach is necessary, classifying it as Vulnerable (VU) under criteria D2. Further research is critical to refine this status.

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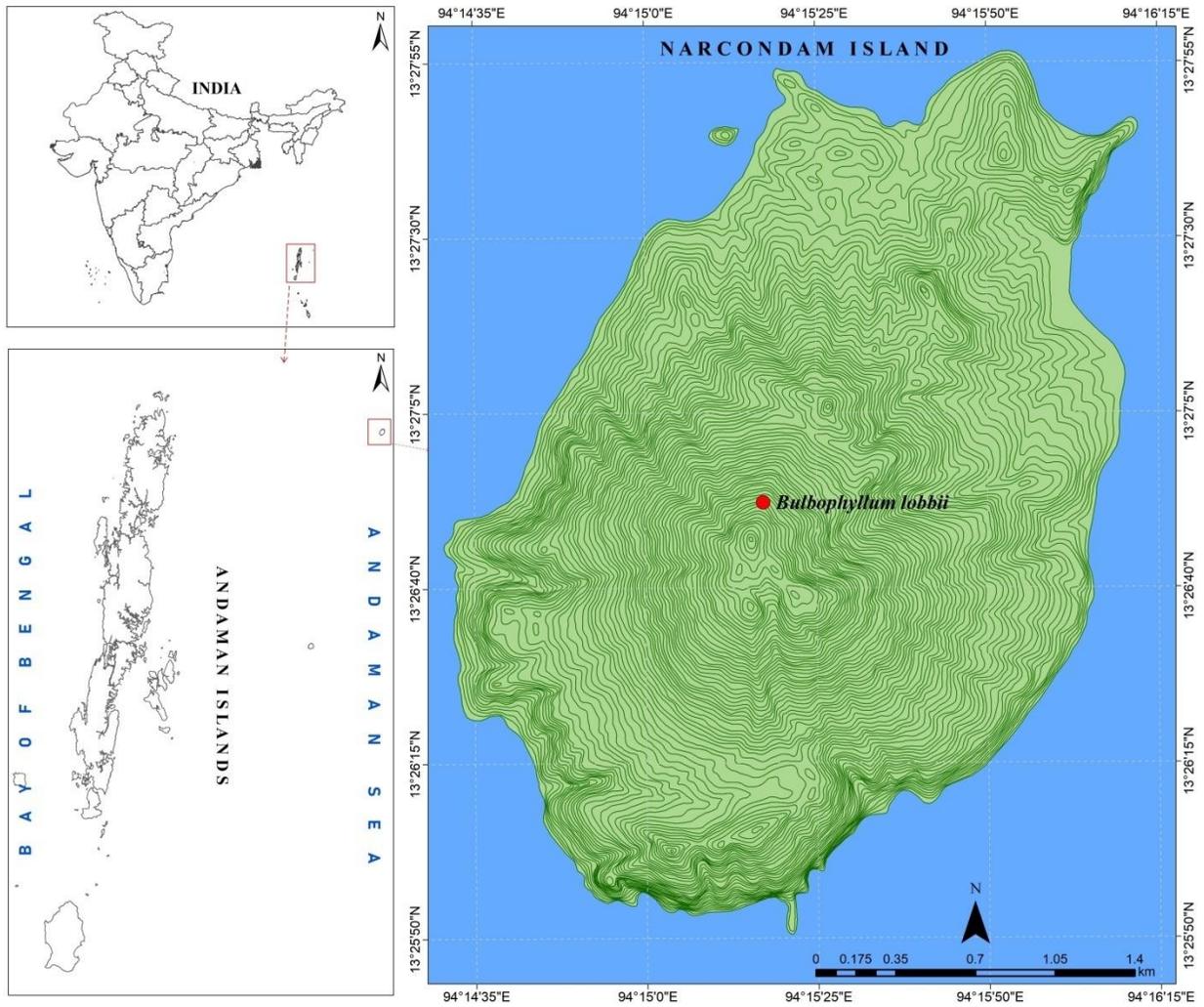


Fig. 1. Distribution of *Bulbophyllum lobbii* Lindl., on Narcondam Island Wildlife Sanctuary.



Fig. 2: *Bulbophyllum lobbii* Lindl. (Orchidaceae): A- Habit; B- Habit on rock; C- Ventral leaf blade; D, Pseudobulb; E- Flower bud (Looks like a lion tooth); F- Flower. Photographs by A.K. Das (A-F).