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NEPENTHES

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ABSTRACT

Eight tax a of Nepenthes have been recorded from the Bau Limestone Area, which includes one limestone obligate and two natural hybrids. The hybrid *N. northiana x gracilis* is here in recorded and formally described. The limestone obligate *N. northiana* is endemic to the Bau Limestone Area.

Keywords: *Nepenthes*, diversity, limestone

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INTRODUCTION

The genus *Nepenthes* is composed of nearly 100 species of carnivorous pitcher plants ranging from Southeast Asia to Australia with outlying species occurring as far west as Madagascar. Most species are primarily restricted to open and marginal habitats including kerangas heath, peatswamp, and mossy or ridge-top forest in areas of high rainfall.

Although limestone formations occur extensively throughout the Malesian region, it is only in Borneo that *Nepenthes* have been found to occur in this habitat. The apparent absence of *Nepenthes* from limestone areas outside of Borneo may be due in part to under collecting, but perhaps such habitats are also seasonally too dry in regions such as Peninsular Malaysia and Thailand. The Bau area has one of the highest year-round rainfall levels in Borneo and has less than two dry months per year (MacKinnon *et al.*, 1996).

Several *Nepenthes* species which are endemic to limestone have been described only relatively recently, such as the Sarawak endemic *N. faizaliana* (Adam and Wilcock, 1991). The limestone cliff species *N. campanulata* was first recorded for Sarawak in Mulu National Park in 1997, despite this area being one of the most floristically studied areas in the State.

In Borneo a total of 15 species of *Nepenthes* have been found in association with limestone, of which four are obligate limestone endemics. Ten of the remaining species are facultative on limestone only and are usually more commonly found on other substrates. Five species, *N. lowii, N.*