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ZINGIBERACEAE AND MARANTACEAE

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INTRODUCTION

A study of two herbaceous plant families, the Zingiberaceae and Marantaceae, was conducted at 20 hills at the Bau Limestone Area. A total of 26 and three species were found respectively in the two families. The most frequent species was *Zingiber acuminatum* var. *borneense* which was documented from nine hills. Most species were not confined to limestone habitats but one species of *Scaphochlamys* (Zingiberaceae), found at six hills, appears to be a limestone specialist and is so far only known from the Bau area. An unidentified species of *Stachyphrynium* (Marantaceae) seems to be almost exclusively found at limestone habitats in Bau and at other sites in Sarawak.

Keywords: gingers, species richness, limestone specialists

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INTRODUCTION

Members of the Marantaceae and the Zingiberaceae are widely distributed in tropical areas and most of them are well represented in lowland forest (Poulsen, 1995, 1997) especially in wet areas near small streams. However, Borneo is still very insufficiently known and largely under-explored for its ginger flora (Larsen *et al.*, 1999). Systematic studies of the Bornean Zingiberaceae have been done especially by Smith (1982-1989), followed by Cowley (1998-2000), Poulsen (1991, 1998), Sakai and Nagamasu (1998-2003, focusing on species at Lambir), Theilade and Christensen (1998) and Theilade and Mood (1997a, b, 1999). Checklists have been compiled for Brunei (Cowley, 1996) and Mt. Kinabalu (Beaman and Beaman, 1998), and other studies have been done at local sites such as Tabin (Halijah, 1989), Sayap (Halijah, 1995a) and Tawau (Halijah, 1995b). To date more than 200