

## ***LOPHOPETALUM PALLIDUM* LAWS. (CELASTRACEAE), AN ADDITION TO THE FLORA OF SINGAPORE**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

*Lophopetalum pallidum* Laws., is a very large tree that has so far been found in Peninsular Malaysia, Sumatra and Borneo (Kochummen, 1995). In this article, its first record for Singapore is described. The single tree discovered in Singapore (Fig. 1) was found beside the MacRitchie Nature Trail and has a girth of 3.17 m and is about 36 m tall. This new discovery still has much to grow before it can approach the maximum height of 58 m that has been recorded for this species in Malaysia (Kochummen & Whitmore, 1972). This species belongs to the family Celastraceae which is well represented in Singapore with 21 species in 10 genera (Chong et al., 2009). In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of The Singapore Red Data Book, Tan et al. (2008) listed 10 genera with 19 species, six of which are classified as nationally extinct. *Lophopetalum pallidum* Laws., is reported to be an ingredient in making dart poison by aborigines in Peninsular Malaysia (Kochummen & Whitmore, 1972).

Celastraceae members consist of several species of large trees that can rival those of the Dipterocarpaceae, Fabaceae, and Sapotaceae in their stature in the forests of this region. *Kokoona reflexa* (Laws.) Ding Hou, is one such species that is frequently encountered in the Central Catchment Nature Reserve. In the field, Celastraceae members can be identified by the venation of their leaves where the tertiary veins are perpendicular to the mid-rib.

Despite the small area that they have receded to, the natural forests in Singapore continue to yield new discoveries. It is imperative for a multitude of reasons that these areas continue to be protected.



Fig 1: Bole and crown of *Lophopetalum pallidum* along the MacRitchie Nature Trail. (Photograph by: Derek Chan).

### SPECIMEN DETAILS

The tree was discovered along the MacRitchie Nature Trail. The specimen of fresh and dried leaves, fruit and seeds (Figs. 2–4) was deposited in the Herbarium, Singapore Botanic Gardens (SING). The specimen details are—Collectors: S. K. Ganesan, Voon Chin Seng, Clayton Lee and Derek Chan; No.: SKG 158; Date: 19 Aug.2009, MacRitchie Nature Trail towards tree top walk between 2.0 and 2.5 km mark, on slope 10 m from right hand side of trail (1°21'8"N 103°49'17"E). Based on Davison (2008), a conservation status category of Critically Endangered status D (CR/D) is proposed for *Lophopetalum pallidum* Laws. in Singapore since there are fewer than 50 mature individuals.



Fig. 2. Leafy branches. Ruler = 15 cm. (Photograph by: S. K. Ganesan).



Fig. 3. Dried leaves showing the diagnostic whitish undersides. Ruler = 15 cm. (Photograph by: S. K. Ganesan).





Fig. 4. Fruit and seeds. Ruler = 15 cm. (Photograph by: S. K. Ganesan).

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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