

Tapeinochilos ananassae (Hassk.) K.Schum.

Family:

Costaceae

Schumann, K.M. (1899) *Botanische Jahrbucher* 27 : 349.

Common name:

Torch Ginger; Ginger, Torch; Backscratcher Ginger; Devil's Pineapple; Ginger, Backscratcher

Stem

Essentially herbaceous with an underground rhizome but leafy shoots at times attaining a height of 2-4 m, usually curled to some extent at the apex of the branches.

Leaves

Leaves variable in size but commonly about 15 x 5 cm. Lateral veins diverge from the midrib at a very low angle and run parallel to one another. Petiole forms a glabrous, longitudinally veined sheath about 2-4 cm long, completely enclosing the stem. Petiolar sheath with a truncate ligule (about 0.2-0.3 cm long) at the apex.

Flowers

Inflorescence usually terminating leafless shoots, cone-like, about 7-20 cm long, consisting mainly of stiff bright red bracts which are recurved towards the apex. Flowers barely exceed the bracts. Calyx lobes unequal, two large + one small. Back of the anther clothed in short, appressed, straight hairs. Stigma expanded, +/- 2-lobed, many times wider than the style.

Fruit

Infructescence stalked, +/- cone-like, about 15-20 cm long consisting mainly of large bracts about 4.5 x 3.2 cm, bracts red but eventually turning brown. Each fruitlet about 30-35 mm long with three lobes at the apex. Each lobe about 7-8 x 6-8 mm. Seeds seated on a fleshy white mass. Aril translucent. Embryo +/- cylindrical.

Seedlings

Cotyledon or first leaf almost orbicular, about 1.2-1.6 mm diam., seed coat remaining attached at the apex. At the tenth leaf stage: leaf blade elliptic or oblanceolate, emerging rolled, lateral veins diverge from the midrib at a very low angle and run parallel to one another. Reticulate veins form ladders with the lateral veins. Petiole forms a glabrous, longitudinally veined sheath completely enclosing the stem. Petiolar sheath hairy with a truncate ligule at the apex. Seed germination time 13 to 142 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Occurs in CYP and NEQ. Altitudinal range from near sea level to about 300 m. Grows as an understory plant in well developed lowland and upland rain forests which have been subjected to some disturbance. Also occurs in New Guinea.

Synonyms

Costus ananassae Hassk., *Abhandl. Naturf. Ges. Halle* 9: 335(1866), Type: Moluccas, Ceram, Neue Schlüssel 191; holo: ?. *Tapeinochilos queenslandiae* (F.M.Bailey) K.Schum., *Das Pflanzenreich Heft* 20 : 433(1904). *Tapeinochilos pungens* var. *queenslandiae* F.M.Bailey, *The Queensland Flora* 5: 1593(1902), Type: In most of the tropical coastal scrubs. *Tapeinochilos pungens* (Teijsm. & Binn.) Miq., *Annales du Museum Lugduno-Batavum* 4 : 101(1869). *Tapeinochilos australis* K.Schum., *Botanische Jahrbucher* 27 : 347(1899), Type: (not cited). *Costus pungens* Teysmann & Binnend., *Tijdschr. Nederl. Ind.* 29: 244(1867), Type: Moluccas, Ceram, Teysmann s. n.

RFK Code

3267



Cone-like inflorescence and flowers. © CSIRO



Cone-like inflorescence, flowers and leaves. © Stanley Breedon



Cone-like inflorescence. © CSIRO



Habit and inflorescence. © CSIRO



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO

