

A NEW SPECIES OF *RHODOSPATHA* (ARACEAE)
FROM COLOMBIA

*Michael Madison**

The genus *Rhodospatha* comprises about a dozen species of scandent epiphytes native from Mexico to Brazil. The plants are rather bland in appearance, having neither the striking foliage of other aroids nor conspicuous inflorescences. Species have been distinguished largely on slight differences in leaf shape and spadix dimensions. In the course of systematic studies in the tribe Monstereae I have encountered five collections of *Rhodospatha*, all from the Comisaria del Vaupés of Colombia, which represents a heretofore undescribed species differing significantly from the known species in the morphology of its flowers and seeds.

***Rhodospatha pachysperma* Madison, sp. nov. (Figure 1)**

Planta epiphytica scandens. Caulis teres, laevis, 7-10 mm crassus, internodiis 2-7 cm longis; folii petiolus 12-20 cm longus, ad laminam usque vaginatus, vagina auriculata; lamina integra, coriacea, ovata, petiolo duplo longiore, 30-45 cm longa, 18-25 cm lata, basi truncata, apice acuminato, nervis lateralibus parallelis, 1-2 mm inter se remotis; cataphyllum linearilanceolatum, 12-18 cm longum, 2-3 cm latum. Pedunculus teretiusculus, 4-7 cm longus, 4-7 mm crassus; spatha ignota; spadix florifer flavus, sessilis vel ad 1 cm stipitatus, 5-9 cm longus, 1.2-1.5 cm crassus; pistilla circa 3 mm lata, 4-4.5 mm longa, ovarium biloculare, loculi biovulati, placentatio axilis. Spadix fructifer flavus, 7-11 cm longus, 1.5-2.0 cm crassus, baccae monospermae, semen reniforme, circa 3 mm longum, testa crustacea, embryo in albumine carnosus.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Greek *pachy-*, "thick," and *sperma*, "seed," in reference to the thick seeds of this species.

HOLOTYPE: COLOMBIA: COMISARIA DEL VAUPES: Río Apaporis Jinogojé at the mouth of the Río Piraparaná, alt. 700 ft., 0° 15' S, 70° 30' W, Feb. 1952, *Schultes & Cabrera 15689* (US!).

PARATYPES: COLOMBIA: COMISARIA DEL VAUPES: Río Apaporis between Río Kananarí & Río Pacoa, alt. 250 m, Dec. 1951, *García-Barriga 13934* (US!); Río Apaporis Jinogojé, June 1952, *Schultes & Cabrera 16753* (US!); Mitú, alt. 200 m, Oct. 1939, *Cuatrecasas 7286* (US!); Río Apaporis, Randal Jirifirimo, below mouth of Río Kananarí, alt. 900 ft., 0° 5' N, 70° 40' W, *Schultes & Cabrera 14934b* (US!).

The definitive generic characters of *Rhodospatha* are a bilocular ovary with axile placentation and the numerous ovules developing into lenticular seeds about 0.5 mm thick and 1-1.5 mm across. These characters are quite uniform in the genus with the exception of the species here described. In *Rhodospatha pachysperma* the number of ovules is reduced to two per loculus, the berries are one-seeded and the seeds are longer than those of other species and thick rather than compressed. In these respects *R. pachysperma* approaches the related genera *Monstera* and *Scindapsus*. That it is a *Rhodospatha*, however, is indicated by a number of characters, including the completely bilocular ovary, the axile placentation, the stipitate spadix, and the albuminous seeds. From other species of *Rhodospatha*, *R. pachysperma* is readily distinguished by its larger seeds, yellow spadices as opposed to the normal color of rose or cream, and coriaceous rather than membranaceous leaves.

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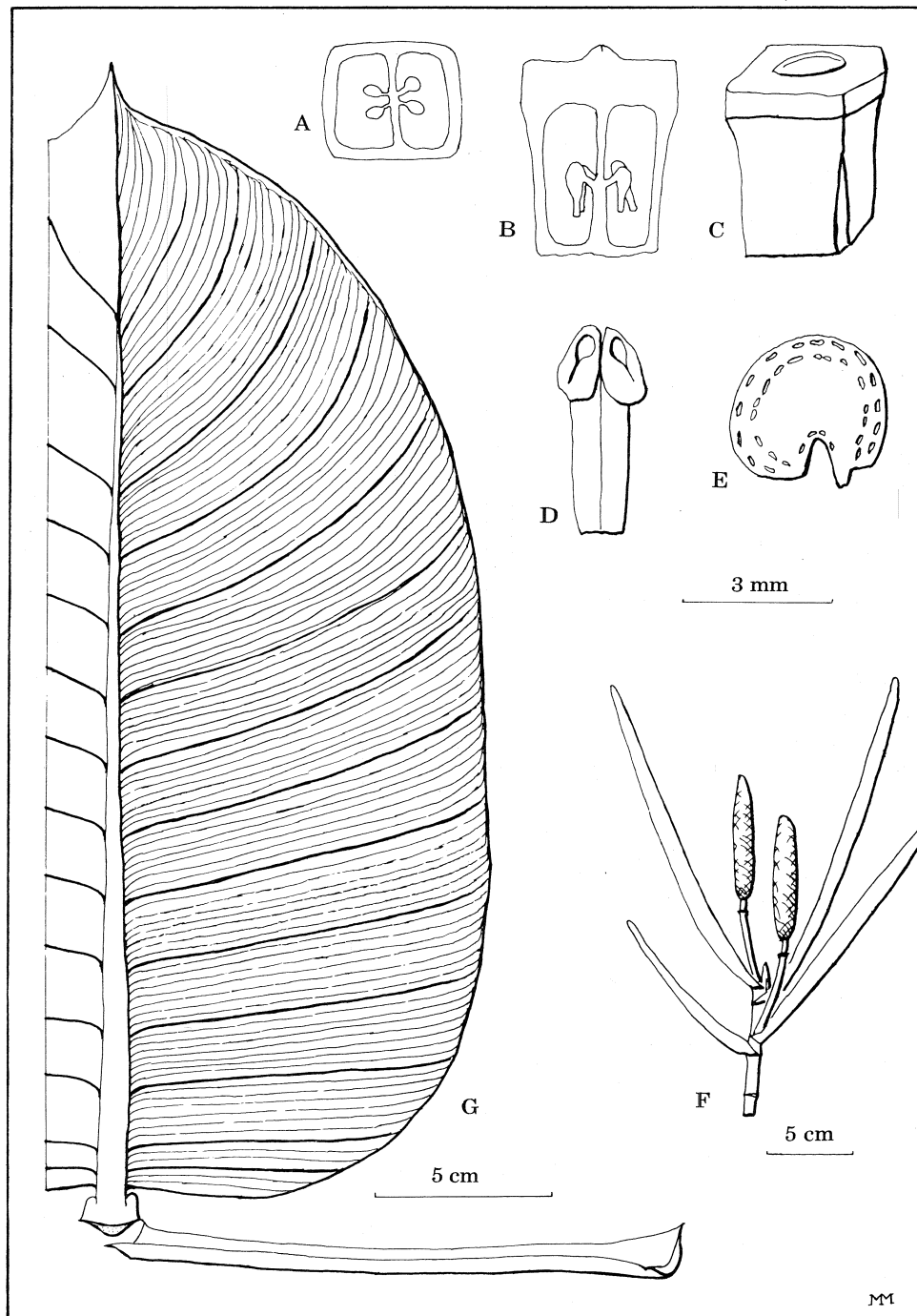


Figure 1. *Rhodspatha pachysperma* Madison. A, pistil, transverse section; B, pistil, longitudinal section; C, pistil; D, stamen at anthesis; E, seed, with raphide sacs; F, flowering shoot; G, leaf.