

TWO NOTEWORTHY ORNAMENTALS FROM THE
CARIBBEAN COAST OF PANAMA

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Coclé del Norte is a village about 80 km west of Colón, on the north coast of Panama at the mouth of the Rio Coclé del Norte. By land, the area is accessible only by long and arduous trails. Culturally and linguistically, the village is a relic of the days when the whole Caribbean coast of Central America had more contact with English-speaking, sea-faring blacks from the West Indies than with the Hispanic cultures of the highlands and the Pacific slope. In August of 1972 the author accompanied Drs. J. D. McPhail and Michael Robinson on a boat trip to Coclé del Norte. Our main objective, to sample the distinctive fish fauna of the Rio Coclé del Norte, was but poorly realized, as the outboard motor was too small to push our little Boston Whaler far up the river. Nevertheless, in the short time that we were there, I found a number of interesting plants. Two of these have proven to be undescribed species of considerable horticultural merit. These have been distributed to various growers and botanical gardens, and valid botanical names are long overdue for both plants.

Anthurium lilacinum Dressler, sp. nov.

Herba saxicola; internodii brevia; petioli gracillimi, breviter vaginati; lamina elliptica vel elliptico-lanceolata, acuta; pedunculi gracillimi, spatha lilacina, ovata, acuta; spadix breviter stipitatus, violaceus.

Lithophytic, forming stilt-like roots as the stem elongates; stem up to 30 cm long, commonly much shorter, 4-6 mm in diameter, internodes short; cataphylls 4-5 cm long, 6-7 mm wide, very thin, reddish brown, the bases persistent; leaves suberect, spreading, petiole 6-11 cm long, subterete, shallowly canaliculate above, sheathing basally for 8-10 mm, geniculum 1-2 cm long, inconspicuous, blade 10-14 cm long, 1.8-3.7 cm wide, elliptic to elliptic-lanceolate, cuneate basally, acute apically, 3-nerved at the base, the lateral veins much less prominent than the midvein; inflorescence erect, peduncle terete, 6-26 cm long, spathe ovate, acute, pale lilac, 2.6-4.2 cm long, 1.5-2.2 cm wide; spadix lilac, stipitate, stipe 3-4 mm long, spadix subcylindric, somewhat tapering above, 10-17 mm long, 4-5 mm in diameter; flowers 2-2.5 mm across in longitudinal diameter and ca. 3 mm transversely, perianth truncate, lilac, apices of lateral segments broadly triangular, the inner face straight or shallowly concave, apices of basal and distal segments narrower, subtetragonal, the inner face concave; filaments broad, ca. 1 mm long and wide, anthers whitish, ca. 0.6-0.7 mm long, 1 mm wide, cells ovoid, extruding the whitish pollen between perianth and ovary, the lateral anthers dehiscent first; ovary truncate, the apex oblong or elliptic-oblong, pale pink, stigmatic slit oblong, ca. 0.3 mm long; fruits whitish, globose, 4-4.5 mm in diameter, each with 1 or 2 seeds; seeds green, ovoid, slightly flattened, 2.5-3 mm long, 2-2.5 mm wide, encased in gelatinous material.

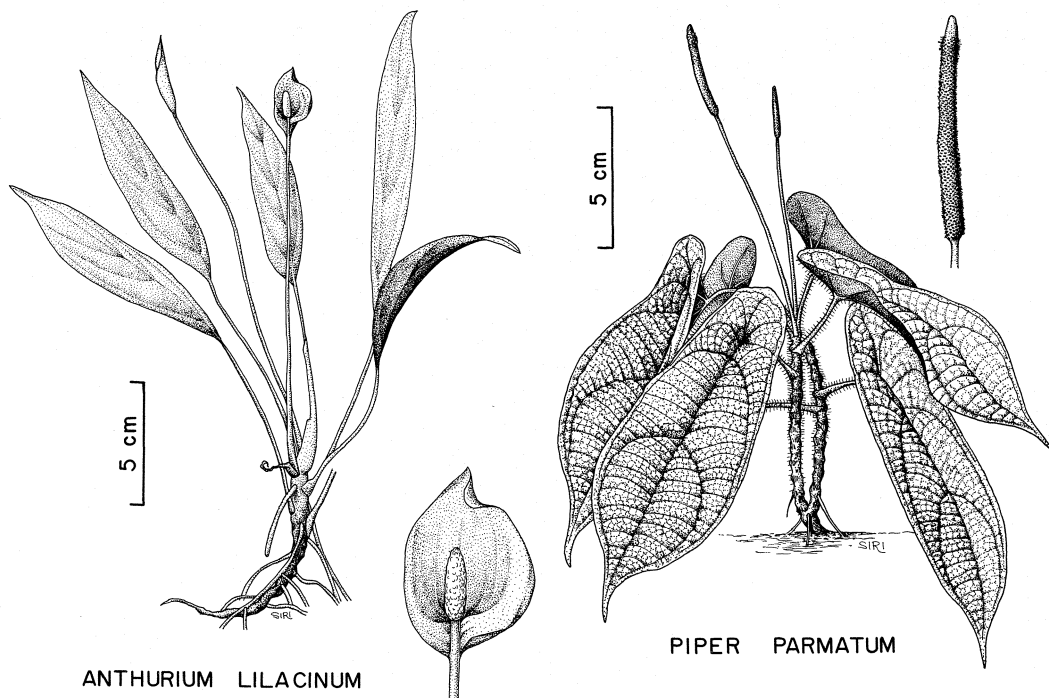
TYPE: PANAMA: COLON: along tributary between Caño Rey and San Lucas, south of Coclé del Norte, 19 August 1972, on boulders, 1.5-2 m above river, spathe pink, spadix pink magenta, *R. L. Dressler 4210* (US, ISOTYPES: MO, PMA, SEL).

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ADDITIONAL MATERIAL EXAMINED: COCLÉ: near Aserradero El Copé, about 9 km north of El Copé, alt. 7-800 m, 9-10 April 1977, Atlantic slope, on rocks in small stream, spathe lavender, *R. L. Dressler 5644* (MO, PMA, SEL, US).

In the Englerian system, *Anthurium lilacinum* seems to fall in Section *Urospadix* Engler, but it is not closely related to the majority of species placed in that section. In Sheffer and Kamemoto's tentative subdivision of the genus (*J. Amer. Soc. Hort. Sci.* 101: 709-713. 1976), it would clearly fall in group II. I believe that *A. lilacinum* is most closely related to *A. antioquense* Engler and *A. antrophyoides* Killip. These Colombian species are both larger plants with white spathes (*A. antrophyoides* may prove to be a synonym of *A. antioquense*).

While the first collection of *A. lilacinum* was found near the mouth of the Rio Coclé del Norte, recently we have found this species in the headwaters of the same river system, in Coclé province. It is to be expected near small, rocky, forested streams throughout the Coclé del Norte basin. In both sites, the plants grow on rocks in or near a small stream and form large mats. Only a few plants were introduced to cultivation from Coclé del Norte, but the locality near El Copé is easily accessible, and the twenty or thirty meters of stream most affected by logging have yielded well over a hundred *Anthurium* plants. The epithet *lilacinum* refers to the unusual color of the spathe. This color already has earned the species some horticultural fame, as the "Lavender *Anthurium*," or the "Dwarf Purple *Anthurium*" (see Clay and Hubbard, the Hawai'i Garden, *Tropical Exotics*, pp. 36-37. 1977). Hawaiian growers are reported to grow the species in fir bark. I have had good success



ANTHURIUM LILACINUM

PIPER PARMATUM

with broken brick or potsherds and a minimum of soil. It requires a moist site and is rather slow growing.

The cineole-like fragrance of the flowers of *A. lilacinum* suggests that this species may be pollinated by euglossine bees, but we have not observed such bees visiting the flowers.

***Piper parmatum* Dressler, sp. nov.**

Planta terrestris erecta; folia peltata, obovata vel elliptico-obovata, acuminata, bullata; pedunculi erecti, elongati; spicae gracillimae, bracteis orbicularibus peltatis.

Herbaceous, stems erect, 5-8 cm long, lightly hispid-pilose, internodes 4-8 mm long; petiole 5-10 cm long, lightly hispid-pilose; prophyll free from the petiole, ca. 1.5 cm long, 6-7 mm wide, reddish brown, hispid-pilose along midvein; leaf blade peltate, attached 1.5-2.5 cm from end of blade, elliptic-obovate or obovate, acuminate, 11-17 cm long, 4.5-8 cm wide, markedly bullate, glabrate above, hispid beneath, especially along veins, with 4 pairs of lateral veins; inflorescence erect, peduncle 5-11 cm long, sparsely pilose, spike 2.5-6 cm long, 2.5-3 mm in diameter, bracts reddish, peltate, subtriangular, ca. 0.7 mm wide; anther whitish, ca. 0.5 mm long, with the connective markedly thickened below; stigmas 3, recurved, each ca. 0.7 mm long.

TYPE: PANAMA: COLON: along tributary between Caño Rey and San Lucas, south of Coclé del Norte, 19 August 1972, leaves dark green, lighter between main veins, *R. L. Dressler 4211* (US, ISOTYPE: PMA).

This distinctive *Piper* is immediately recognizable by the combination of short stature and peltate, bullate leaves. In Panama, the only other *Piper* of such reduced size is *P. perbreviceale*, but in that species the stems are repent and the leaf shape quite different. The epithet *parmatum*, or "shield-bearing," refers to the shield-like shape of the leaf blade.

When the stems of *P. parmatum* reach 8 or 10 cm in length, the stem ceases apical growth and a new stem arises from the base of the old stem. By covering the base of the new stem with soil and cutting the new shoot away once roots have formed, one can propagate the plants and get several new plants from each old stem. However, the process is painfully slow, and pinning the old stems down to the soil surface may prove to be easier. My plants have not set seed in cultivation, and all may be part of a single clone.