

Plectocomia pierreana

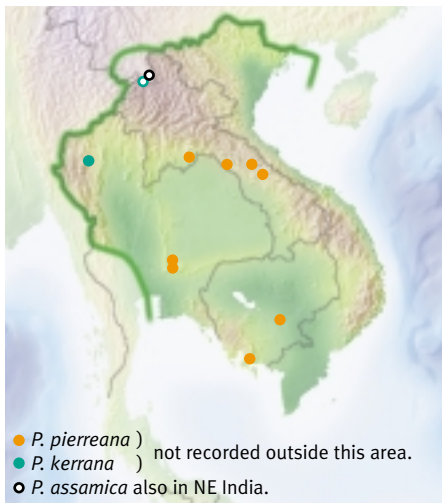
30

(wai katheui, wai lao, wai namkhao, wai tang, wai nyipoon, probably also wai hom, wai khom, wai leuk, wai loi, wai louang, wai meu, wai taven, wai thoon, wai xang, blong knair, blong roi)

Climbing Clustering Cirrus No knee

Look for:

- Leaflets white underneath (wears off with age, so check the leaflet bases on old leaves).
- Sheath spines ≤ 2 cm, scattered or in groups of 5–10. Petiole of upper leaves ≤ 3 cm long.
- Only flowering stems can be certainly identified from some other *Plectocomia* species.



Habitat

In Lao recorded in evergreen forest at 300–550 m. Recorded at 700 m in Thailand and 900–1000 m in Cambodia. Unidentified *Plectocomias*, probably mainly *pierreana*, found all over Indochina up to 1000 m.

Fruiting and flowering months

Flowers open 3 (Lao), 3 (Thailand).
Fruit unripe 2, 3 (Lao), 7 (Cambodia), ripe 5 (Cambodia).

Uses

Handicrafts: suitable (lower part of stem).
Trade: not suitable.
Shoot: edible.

Planting

None known in Lao.

Stem

Stem up to 35 m long and 0.5–4 cm diameter. Stem thin near the ground, much thicker before flowering.

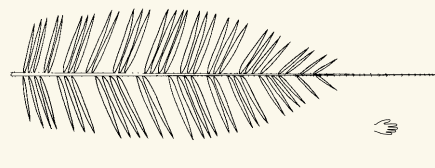
Sheath 1–9 cm diameter.

Sheath green, often with dark indumentum.

Spines weak, golden, needle-like. Scattered singly or in groups, usually no more than 5 together. 1–2 cm long on lower sheaths (see photo), ≤ 1 cm higher up.

Ocrea absent.



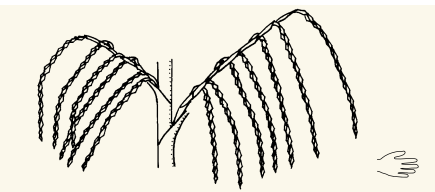


Whole leaf 2–3 m long plus a cirrus of 0.5–1 m.

Petiole of upper leaves 0–3 cm long. Up to 2.5 cm wide.

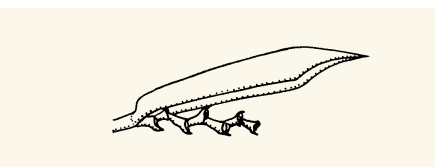
Largest leaflets 40–55 cm × 3.5–4 cm.

Newly emerged leaflets have white indumentum underneath, which gradually wears off. Leaflets with three main veins, one central and one at each margin, without bristles. Leaflet without a long hair-like tip.



Inflorescence 0.5–1 m long with no flagellum. Two shown in picture. Branches pendulous, up to 70 cm.

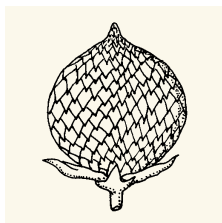
Primary bracts entire, slightly inflated, unarmed. Secondary bracts overlapping, expanded to cover rachillae.



♂ 2-branched. Secondary bracts 1.9–4.0 cm long. Rachillae thin, 0.8–1.9 cm, 2.0 mm wide.



♀ 2-branched. Secondary bracts 2.5–4 cm long. Rachillae thicker than male, 1.2–2.0 cm, with red fur.



Fruit

2.0 cm long

2.0 cm wide

Scales not bristly.

Seed not ruminant.

Compare:

- *P. elongata* (31a): petiole 15–20 cm, sheath spines in long neat rows, all parts of plant bigger, fruits bristly.
- *P. himalayana* (31): leaflets not white below, tip hair-like, sheath spines in long neat rows.
- *Myrialepis paradoxa* (28) and *Plectocomiopsis geminiflorus* (29): have leaflets never white below, inflorescences very different, white dots or golden hairs on the leaflets.

• 30a *Plectocomia kerrana*

Male secondary bracts 4–5 cm long, rachillae 2.5–3.5 cm long. Female secondary bracts 4–5 cm long, rachillae ≥2.0 cm long, fruit 2.5 cm long, 2.3 cm diameter. In N Thailand at 1200 m.

• 30b *Plectocomia assamica*

Bigger (e.g. petiole over 4 cm wide). Female secondary bracts 6–7 cm long, rachillae 1.5–2.5 cm, fruit 3.5 cm diameter. Male parts unknown.