

# *Plectocomia himalayana*

31

(probably *wai katheui*)

Climbing Clustering Cirrus No knee

## Look for:

- Leaflets in groups, never white below. Very long, hair-like tip.
- Sheath spines all neatly arranged in long combs ( $\geq 20$  per comb). Petiole very short.
- Grows high in the mountains.



## Habitat

In S Yunnan (and probably N Thailand) grows above 1600 m.

## Fruiting and flowering months

Flowers ?

Fruit ?

## Uses

Handicrafts: suitable.

Trade: unknown.

Shoot: unknown.

## Planting

None recorded in Lao.



## Stem

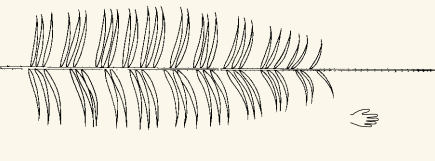
Stem up to 10 m long and 0.5–4 cm diameter.

Sheath 1–10 cm diameter.

Sheath green.

Spines short ( $\leq 1.5$  cm), yellow, all neatly arranged in long rows of 20 or more.

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 cm wide.

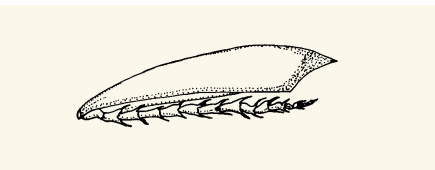
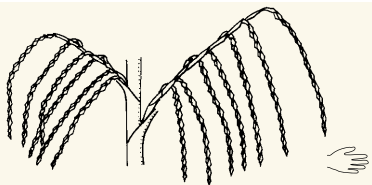
Largest leaflets 45–50 cm × 3.5–4 cm.

Leaflets never have white indumentum below and lack the white dots of *Myrialepis* (28). Five or more prominent veins on the upper surface. Tip has a long, thread-like part up to 7 cm.

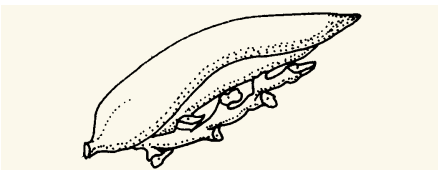
**Inflorescence** up to 2 m long with no flagellum. Two shown in picture. Branches pendulous, up to 80 cm.

Primary bracts entire, slightly inflated, unarmed.

Secondary bracts overlapping, expanded to cover rachillae.



♂ 2-branched. Secondary bracts 4–5.5 cm long, rachillae 2.0–2.8 cm.



♀ 2-branched. Secondary bracts 4–5.5 cm long, rachillae 1.2–2.5 cm.



### Fruit

1.5 cm long

≤1.5 cm wide

Scales not bristly.

Seed not ruminant.

### Compare:

- *Plectocomia* species (30, 30a, 30b): leaflets white underneath when freshly emerged, sheath spines not in long combs, leaflets not ending in long hair-like tips
- *Plectocomiopsis geminiflorus* (29): leaflets regular, ocrea long, spines not in combs
- *Myrialepis paradoxa* (28): leaflets regular, without long tip, spines on younger sheaths and petiole in short, tall combs. Inflorescence very different.

### • 31a *Plectocomia elongata*

Spines in long neat combs, leaflets white underneath, without a thread-like tip. From *P. pierreana* by larger size (e.g. petiole ≥4 cm wide, leaflets 50–65 cm), petiole 10–15 cm long, fruit bristly (see picture), 3 cm diameter. In Vietnam at 200–400 m.

