



The Genus *Sulettaria* A.D.Poulsen & Mathisen (Zingiberaceae) in Sarawak, Malaysia

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Abstract: Zingiberaceae is one of the most common herbaceous plant families in the tropical rainforests of Borneo, Malaysia. Many studies have been conducted on this family, yet the documentation of this family is still far from complete. Zingiberaceae also included many species that were reclassified, with many new genera introduced to accommodate the species based on the molecular work. *Sulettaria* A.D.Poulsen and Mathisen is one of the examples of a new genus introduced to accommodate such ginger species from Southeast Asia formerly from the genera *Elettaria* and *Amomum*. The majority of the species that are assigned to this new genus are found in Sarawak. This study aims to document information on *Sulettaria* with special reference to ecological and taxonomic aspects from Sarawak. A checklist of species found in Sarawak is included.

Keywords: Borneo, diversity, endemic, Malaysia, taxonomy, wild gingers

1. Introduction

The subclass Zingiberidae encompasses two orders, nine families and approximately 3,800 species worldwide. The two orders, Bromeliales and Zingiberales are nearly equal in size (number of species), but Bromeliales is represented solely by the Bromeliaceae, whereas Zingiberales is represented by eight families, namely Cannaceae, Costaceae, Heliconiaceae, Lowiaceae, Marantaceae, Musaceae, Strelitziaceae and Zingiberaceae. The largest family in the order Zingiberales is Zingiberaceae or previously known as Scitammineae, with 52 genera and approximately 1,400 species [1].

The classification of plants is being reorganised because of current advancements in technology, and several ranks are being reinstated. For instance, *Amomum*, one of the largest genera in Zingiberaceae, has been divided into six genera based on DNA data and field morphologies [2]. While some of the species were grouped into a new genus, e.g., *Sulettaria*. The documentation work on the Zingiberaceae in Sarawak is still far from complete. Although much work has been published, for example, Lamb et al. [3], Poulsen [4], [5], [6], Smith [7], Meekiong and Teo [1], yet many new species are being discovered and described in recent years [8], [9], [10].