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***Sonerila namii* (Melastomataceae, Sonerileae), a new species from Central Highlands, Vietnam**

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Summary. A new species, *Sonerila namii*, is described from Gia Lai Province in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. The new species shares several morphological similarities with *S. repens* but differs in having a stem covered with golden-brown to maroon hispid or hispid-hirsute hairs (vs. white woolly), a leaf blade bearing white hirsute or gland-tipped hirsute hairs on both surfaces (vs. pubescent with simple hairs), about 6 pairs of secondary veins (vs. 2 or 3 pairs), a hypanthium with white hispid or gland-tipped hispid hairs and minute glandular trichomes (vs. woolly simple hairs), and petals up to 2.3 cm long (vs. up to 1.2 cm). According to the IUCN criteria, it may tentatively be assessed as Least Concern (LC).

***Sonerila namii* (Melastomataceae, Sonerileae) – новый вид из Центрального нагорья Вьетнама**

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Ключевые слова: разнообразие растений, семейство Melastomataceae, таксономия растений, триба *Sonerileae*, флора Вьетнама, эндемизм.

Аннотация. Новый вид, *Sonerila namii*, описан из провинции Зялай, расположенной на Центральном нагорье Вьетнама. Новый вид имеет морфологическое сходство с *S. repens*, но отличается стеблем, покрытым щетинистыми или жёстко-щетинистыми волосками от золотисто-коричневого до бордового цвета (против белого войлочного опушения), листовой пластинкой с белыми жёстковолосистыми, иногда железистыми, волосками на обеих поверхностях (против мягкого опушения), наличием 6 пар вторичных жилок (против 2–3 пар), гипантием с белыми щетинистыми или железисто-щетинистыми волосками и крошечными железистыми трихомами (против войлочного опушения), а также лепестками длиной до 2,3 см (против длины до 1,2 см). Согласно критериям IUCN (МСОП), виду может быть предварительно присвоен статус «вызывающий наименьшие опасения» (LC).

Introduction

Sonerila Roxb. (Roxburgh, 1820) comprises over 200 species of mostly herbs or dwarf subshrubs, characterized by 3-merous flowers, anthers with one or two apical pores, and stamens lacking a distinct anther connective (Renner et al., 2001; Chen, Renner, 2007). The genus is broadly distributed throughout tropical and subtropical Asia, extending to northern Oceania (Phonepaseuth et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2022; Sae Wai, Hu, 2023). Vietnam is recognized as a global botanical hotspot due to its rich and diverse ecosystems (Myers et al., 2000). In particular, members of Melastomataceae have seen a remarkable increase in newly described genus and species in recent years (Lin et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2024a, b, 2025; Phung et al., 2025).

During our continued botanical exploration aimed at refining the Vietnamese flora, we surveyed a tropical montane seasonal forest in Gia Lai Province. During this survey, we discovered an unusual species of *Sonerila* that, at first glance, resembled *S. repens* J. Wai et J. M. Hu, a species recently described from Nan Province in Northern Thailand (Sae Wai, Hu, 2023). However, the newly collected material does not fully correspond to *S. repens* in detailed morphology or geographic distribution.

A thorough examination of Indochinese *Sonerila* species confirmed that this material represents a taxon distinct from all previously known species. Here, we describe and illustrate this new species and provide notes on its taxonomy, ecology, and conservation status.

Material and Methods

The measurements and descriptions of the species studied are based on observations of living plants collected in 2025. Voucher specimens and additional materials preserved in alcohol are deposited in the VNF Herbarium. Conservation status was assessed following the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria (IUCN Standards..., 2024), and the morphological terminology used herein follows Beentje (2016).

Taxonomic treatment

Sonerila namii C. H. Nguyen, Aver. et C. W. Lin, **sp. nov.** (Figs. 1, 2).

Type: “Vietnam, Gia Lai Province: Kon Ka Kinh National Park, Kbang Commune, humid mossy primary and secondary evergreen broad-leaved forest on steep mountain slopes, at elevation of 1450 m a. s. l., around point 14°19'27"N, 108°24'06"E, locally common. 15 X 2025. Cuong Huu Nguyen, Nam Van Duong, NHC-20251015010” (holo – VNF!, iso – VNF!).

Etymology. The specific epithet honors a postgraduate student from Vietnam National Forestry University, Duong Van Nam, who collected and provided specimens of this new species.

Description. Terrestrial, perennial caulescent herbs. **Stems** suberect to ascending in upper part, decumbent at the base and rooting at lower nodes, few-branched; stem brownish-green to brownish-red, terete, up to 20 cm long, 2–3 mm in diameter, internodes 0.3–2(4.5) cm, becoming gradually shorter towards the apex of the stem, densely golden brown to maroon hispid or hispid-hirsute (2–3 mm long) mixed with minutely, transparent glandular trichomes (less than 0.1 mm long). **Leaves** petiolate, opposite, decussate, isomorphic, equal or slightly unequal in each pair of sizes, held horizontally or slightly pointing upward; petiole sub-terete, grooved above, pale pinkish-green to brownish-pink, up to 3 cm long at lower part of stems, becoming shorter (less than 2 mm long) towards the upper stem part, 1–2 mm in diameter, almost white to pale pinkish-yellow, villous or hispid-villous (up to 2 mm long) mixed with minutely, transparent glandular trichomes; leaf blades chartaceous, symmetrical, rarely asymmetrical, ovate, elliptic-ovate to widely ovate, (0.8)2–5 × (0.6)1–3 cm (leaves at the apex of stem gradually smaller), base cuneate to obtuse, rarely rounded and oblique, apex acute to acuminate, margin serrulate, with each tooth tipped by a hirsute-puberulous, hairs 0.5–2 mm long; adaxially malachite green to dark reddish-green or maroon, subvelutinous, slightly

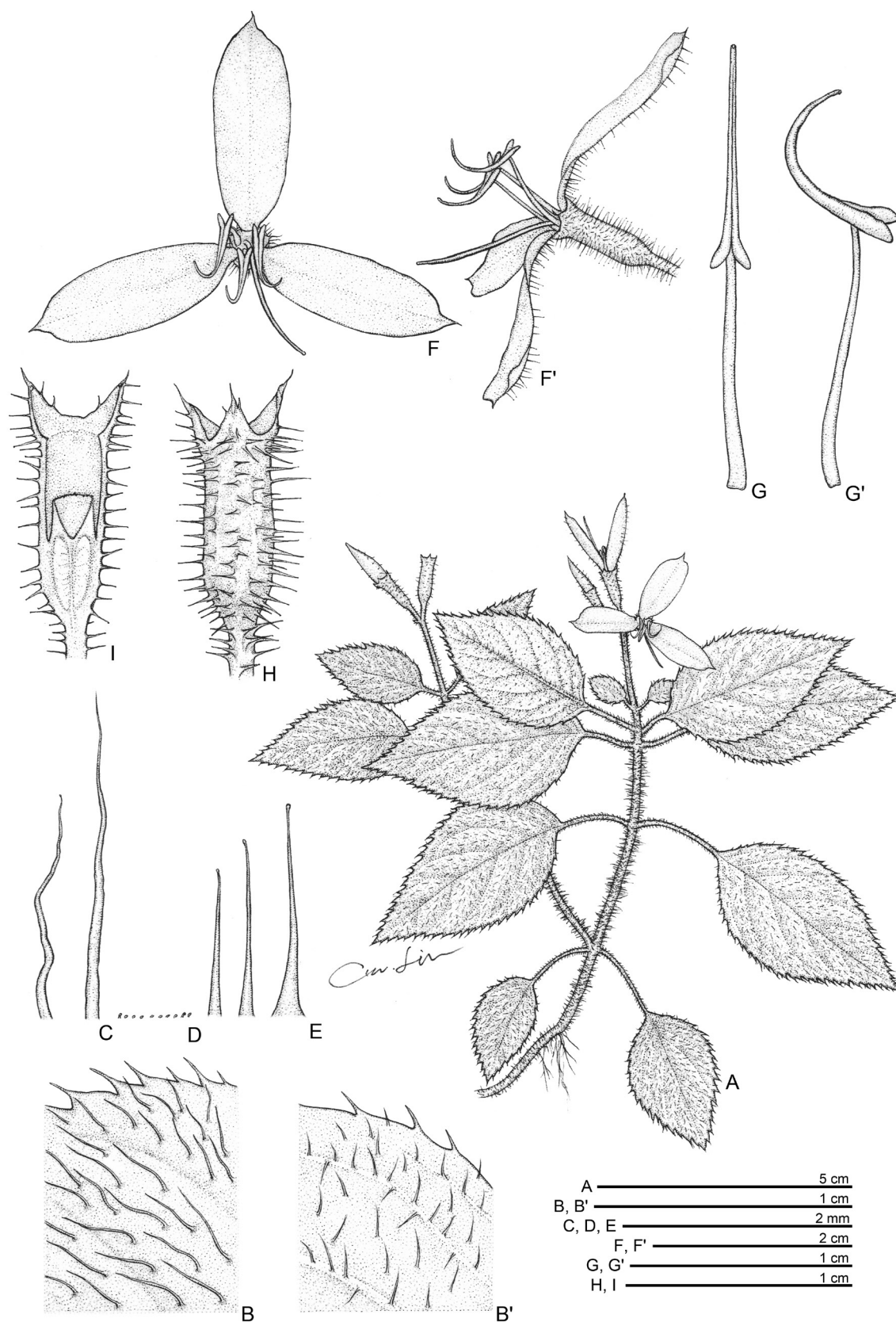


Fig. 1. *Sonerila namii*: A – habit; B, B' – portions of leaf, adaxial and abaxial surfaces; C, D, E – indumentum of reproductive structures: C – villous-hirsute or gland-tipped hirsute indumentum on leaf, D – minutely glandular trichomes on vegetative parts, E – gland-tipped hispid on hypanthium and abaxially of petals; F, F' – flower, frontal and side views; G, G' – stamens, frontal and side views; H – hypanthium; I – longitudinal section of ovary. Drawing by Che Wei Lin from the holotype NHC-20251015010.

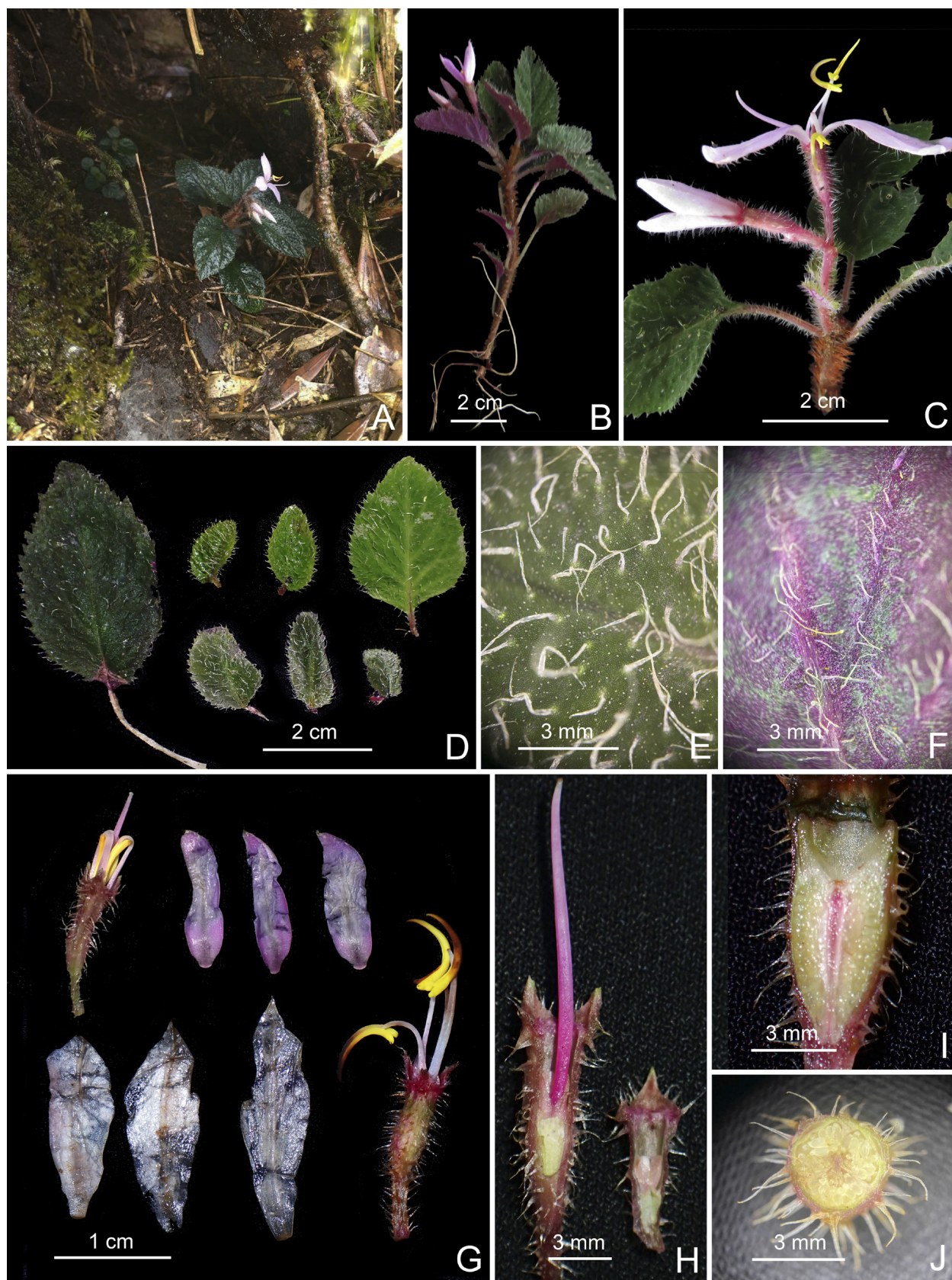


Fig. 2. *Sonerila namii*: A – habit and habitat; B – habit; C – flowering branch; D – leaves; E – portions of leaf, adaxial surface; F – same, abaxial surface; G – hypanthium, petals, stamens, and styles; H – longitudinal section of ovary; I – longitudinal section of immature fruit; J – cross section of immature fruit. Photos A by Tinh Van Lam; photos B – J by Cuong Huu Nguyen of plants used for the preparation of type herbarium specimen NHC-20251015010.

bullate, moderately sparsely white hirsute or gland-tipped hirsute (2–4 mm long) and with minute glandular trichomes; abaxially magenta to light greenish with pinkish-purple tint, sparsely hirsute or gland-tipped hirsute and with minute glandular trichomes, more densely along midrib and primary veins; venation pinnate, commonly with 6 major lateral veins on either side of midrib; midrib and primary vein grooved adaxial and prominent on the abaxial surface. **Bracts** minute, inconspicuous, triangular to narrowly triangular, hispid-hirsute. **Inflorescence** terminal, simple scorpioid cyme, erect, 2–5-flowered; peduncles terete, 0.8–3 cm or longer, magenta to pinkish-green, white to pale pink villous-hispid mixed with minute, transparent glandular trichomes. **Flowers** 3-merous; pedicels dusky rosy pink, terete, 5–6 mm long, white villous-hispid mixed with minute, transparent glandular trichomes. **Hypanthium** cylindrical-obconical or cylindrical-campanulate, dusky pink or rosy pink with green tint, 5–8 mm long, 2–3 mm in diameter, triangular, slightly 6-ribbed, white hispid or gland-tipped hispid, with minute glandular trichomes; part of hypanthium free from ovary 3.5–5 mm long. **Calyx lobes** 3, pink to red tinged green towards apex, triangular, keeled, ca. 2×2 mm, connate into a torus, each lobe with an acute-angled narrowly triangular external tooth (1 mm or less long), puberulous or hispid-puberulous. **Petals** 3, light pink, narrowly oblong-obovate to narrowly elliptic-oblong, slightly oblique, $13\text{--}23 \times 4\text{--}7$ mm, abaxial median vein with scattered white gland-tipped hispid hairs, margin entire, apex acute and apiculate. **Stamens** 3, isomorphic, glabrous, filamentose; filaments light pinkish or white tinged magenta towards base, slightly flattened, 9–12 mm long; anther golden yellow, lanceolate, curved ventrally, 7–10 mm long, deeply cordate at base, with two pores at apex. **Ovary** ca. 3.5 mm long, 3-locular; ovary crown ca. 2 mm high, pink to pale brownish-pink, margin repand-erose; ovules numerous. **Style** filiform, light pink to rosy pink, up to 20 mm long; stigma obscurely capitate. **Fruit** not seen.

Ecology and habitat. This species grows in primary and secondary evergreen broad-leaved forest on steep mountain slopes in wet places with soil rich in humus at elevation of 1450–1600 m a. s. l. As common plants in habitats of the new species have been recorded *Podocarpus neriifolius* D. Don (Podocarpaceae), *Amentotaxus argotaenia* (Hance) Pilg. (Taxaceae), *Sloanea sinensis* Hemsl. (Elaeocarpaceae), *Camellia* sp. (Theaceae), *Beccarinda tonkinensis* (Pellegr.) B. L.

Burtt (Gesneriaceae), *Argostemma bariense* Pierre ex Pit. (Rubiaceae), and *Nyssa javanica* Wangerin (Cornaceae).

Phenology. Flowers in September–October.

Vernacular name. Son linh nam (*Sonerila* is rendered in Vietnamese as “Son linh”).

Distribution. The new species is only known from Kbang Commune (in the territory of Kon Ka Kinh National Park), Gia Lai Province, Central Highlands region of Vietnam. It is likely endemic to a very limited area of Kon Ka Kinh National Park.

Conservation status. The species is presently known only from a single location as a common plant, which grows in primary and old secondary forests in an area that is currently officially protected as part of Kon Ka Kinh National Park. Following the criteria and terms of the Guidelines for Using the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria, version 16 (IUCN Standards..., 2024), we preliminarily estimate the conservation status of newly discovered species as a Least Concern (LC).

Notes. *Sonerila namii* has the largest flowers among *Sonerila* species currently known from Indochina and may therefore have considerable horticultural potential. It is characterized by a dwarf and relatively compact habit, a terete and wingless stem, elliptic-ovate leaves with moderately hirsute or glandular hairs on both surfaces, and pinnate venation. Nearly all vegetative parts are covered with minute glandular trichomes visible under magnification. In overall appearance, these combined characters render the species superficially similar to *S. repens* and *S. banthatensis* J. Wai et J. M. Hu (Sae Wai, Hu, 2023). However, *S. namii* can be readily distinguished from other two species by a consistent suite of morphological differences. *Sonerila namii* differs from *S. repens* in having a stem densely covered with golden-brown to maroon hispid or hispid-hirsute hairs (vs. white woolly), leaf blades white hirsute or gland-tipped hirsute on both surfaces (vs. pubescent with simple hairs), pinnate venation (vs. suprabasal acrodromous or occasionally subpinnate), about 6 pairs of secondary veins (vs. 2 or 3 pairs), pedicels 5–6 mm long (vs. 1.5–3 mm), a hypanthium with white hispid or gland-tipped hispid hairs and minute glandular trichomes (vs. woolly), and petals up to 2.3 cm long (vs. up to 1.2 cm).

Like *Sonerila namii*, *S. banthatensis* has ovate hairy leaves, pinnate venation, and gland-tipped hairs on the peduncles, hypanthium, and abaxial surface of the petals. However, the new species differs from *S. banthatensis* in having a terete stem

(vs. quadrangular) that is densely covered with golden-brown to maroon hispid or hispid-hirsute hairs 2–3 mm long (vs. gland-tipped hairs ca. 1 mm long). The leaf blade is moderately sparsely hirsute or gland-tipped hirsute adaxially (vs. sparsely and minutely strigose) and sparsely hirsute or gland-tipped hirsute abaxially, becoming denser along the veins (vs. sparsely and minutely strigose along the secondary veins). The secondary veins number about 6 on each side of the median vein (vs. 3 or 4), and the petals reach up to 2.3 cm long (vs. up to 1.4 cm).

In its overall habit, the new species bears some resemblance to *S. cantonensis* Stapf (Stapf, 1892) (= *S. yunnanensis* Jeffrey ex W. W. Sm. (Smith, 1914), but the two species differ markedly in several

vegetative and floral characters. *Sonerila namii* is characterized by terete stems densely covered with golden-brown to maroon hispid to hispid-hirsute hairs (vs. quadrangular stems with white villous-hirsute), serrulate leaf margins (vs. denticulate), terete peduncles (vs. quadrangular peduncles), substantially larger petals measuring 13–23 × 4–7 mm (vs. 7–10 × 3–4 mm), and uniformly yellow anthers (vs. bicolored, yellow proximally and pale purple to grayish-white distally).

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