

The hairy taxonomy of *Eria*

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Until recently, *Eria* was one of the big three orchid genera in Asia, with about 350 species (the two others being *Bulbophyllum* and *Dendrobium*). Molecular phylogenetic studies have since shown that *Eria* is polyphyletic. Its species are distributed over three main clades, interspersed with several other genera, such as *Appendicula*, *Ceratostylis*, *Mediocalcar*, *Porpax*, and *Pseuderia*. Evidently, the generic circumscription of *Eria* needed revising. Based on ITS, matK, trnL-F spacer, trnL intron and ycf1 sequences a phylogenetic hypothesis for tribe Podochileae with emphasis on subtribe Eriinae s.s. was proposed. The resulting tree showed that *Eria* could be divided into smaller genera along the lines of many of the previously recognized sections, with some exceptions. It turned out that some of the traditional sections of *Eria*, e.g. sect. *Hymeneria*, were themselves polyphyletic. Generic delimitation thus presented a dilemma: either to lump many morphologically distinctive genera into a single supergenus much larger than *Eria* in its former circumscription, or to split *Eria* into about 20 smaller genera, a few of which would be difficult to distinguish on morphology. In the end, the latter course prevailed in the team that carried out this work, and the resulting classification is here presented.