Report of a new A. fistulosum variety from Manipur, India

Allium fistulosum var. *chirumaroi* is a newly described variety of bunching onion discovered in Manipur, North-East India, and cultivated by indigenous communities in Bungte Chiru and Nungshai Chiru villages. This unique onion, locally known as 'Chiru Maroi,' stands out from the common bunching onion (*A. fistulosum var. fistulosum*) due to its shorter plant height, brownish-yellow bulb membrane, smaller globose umbels, and sterile flowers. Scientific studies confirmed its distinctiveness through detailed morphological comparisons, cytological analysis (chromosome count 2n = 16), and molecular phylogenetic analysis using ITS and rbcL DNA barcoding, which showed that while closely related to other bunching onions, 'Chiru Maroi' forms a separate, stable lineage. The plant is propagated vegetatively and is an important part of local diets, used fresh or in traditional dishes and herbal remedies. Despite its culinary and cultural significance, 'Chiru Maroi' has a limited geographic range and faces threats from the spread of commercial onion varieties, making its conservation crucial. The formal recognition of this variety not only enriches the genetic diversity of Allium in the region but also highlights the importance of documenting and preserving underutilized crops that are integral to local heritage and agrobiodiversity. This discovery underscores the value of systematic botanical exploration and integrative taxonomy in uncovering and safeguarding unique plant resources.

Citation

Khar, A., Anal, P.M., Pandey, A., Malav, P.K., Verma, A., Rajkumar, S. & Zimik, M. (2026) A new potential variety of bunching onion (*Allium fistulosum* L.) from North-East India. *Phytotaxa* 773 (2): 181–190. https://doi.org/10.11646/phytotaxa.773.2.7