

ORCHIDACEAE

HABENARIA AMOENA NEWLY RECORDED FOR NAMIBIA

The orchid flora of Namibia is depauperate compared to the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, and only 17 species have so far been documented for the country (WCSP 2012). These include one species each of *Ansellia* Lindl., *Bartholina* R.Br., *Bonatea* Willd. and *Holothrix* Rich. ex Lindl., eight species of *Eulophia* R.Br ex Lindl., and five species of *Habenaria* Willd. (WCSP 2012). Much of the country is arid and thus not suitable for orchids; whereas more humid parts, such as the Caprivi Strip, are under-explored.

In the course of 2010, an orchid specimen (*Mannheimer & Greeff 4394*, Figure 1) was sent to the author by the Windhoek Herbarium (WIND) for identification. On first impression it looked like the fairly common and widespread *Habenaria malacophylla* Rchb.f., which has not been recorded for Namibia. However, *H. malacophylla* is typically associated with upland,

closed-canopy rain forest, a habitat not found in Namibia.

A closer examination of the plant and keying it out in the Flora of Tropical East Africa (Summerhayes 1968) and Flora Zambesiaca (La Croix & Cribb 1995), revealed that it was a specimen of *Habenaria amoena* Summerh., previously only recorded from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The morphological differences between *H. amoena* and *H. malacophylla* are subtle but clear (Table 1). The specimen itself closely matches the type of *H. amoena* (*Richards 1000* (K), sheet I and II) and the dissected flower matches the drawings made by Summerhayes (1968) and attached to the type as sheet III (all downloaded from JSTOR Plant Science).

The habitat of *H. amoena* has been reported as “open woodland and scrub” (Summerhayes 1968), “woodland,



FIGURE 1.—*Habenaria amoena*. A, plant *in situ* (photograph: Coleen Mannheimer); B, image of specimen: Mannheim & Greeff 4394.

TABLE 1.—Vegetative and floral characters that distinguish *H. amoena* from *H. malacophylla*

Feature	<i>H. amoena</i>	<i>H. malacophylla</i>
Stem	Leafy along its entire length.	Only leafy in the centre and bare in the lower part.
Flowers	Nearly horizontal.	Curved outwards.
Lip	Decurved. Base undivided for about 1.5 mm.	Projecting outwards. Trilobed nearly to the base.
Spur	Side lobes considerably longer than midlobe. 17–22 mm [19–20 mm in specimen]. Only slightly swollen in apical half.	Side lobes slightly longer than midlobe. 9–18 mm. Thicker in the middle than at either end.
Anther	2 mm high.	1.5 mm high.

rocky hillsides” (La Croix & Cribb 1995) and “*Brachystegia* woodland” (La Croix *et al.* 1991), which is similar to the habitat where this particular specimen was collected from, namely “mixed bushveld”.

***Habenaria amoena* Summerh.** in Kew Bulletin 11: 218 (1956). Type: Zambia, Abercorn district, Chilongowelo, Richards 1000 (K, holo.—JSTOR plant Science image!).

Specimen examined

NAMIBIA.—1917 (Tsumeb): Otjozondjupa, Otavi, small holding near Otavi, 19° 38.853'S; 17° 21.975'E (–CB), 1 440 m, 13 Mar. 2009, Mannheim & Greeff 4394 (WIND).

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