

## THYMELAEACEAE

### NOTES ON GNIDIA

In the Genera of Southern African Flowering Plants the genus *Gnidia* is interpreted by Dyer (1975: 393) in a wide sense to include the genera *Lasiosiphon*, *Arthrosolen*, *Pseudognidia*, *Basutica* and *Struthiolopsis* — an opinion I fully endorse, but with the addition of the genus *Craspedostoma* Domke as a further synonym. When treating *Gnidia* in this sense, some new names become necessary. Three are published in this note.

***Gnidia albosericea* M. Moss ex Peterson, nom. nov.**

*Lasiosiphon ornatus* Burtt Davy, Fl. Transv. 1: 45, 206 (1926); Compton, Annot. Check List Flora Swaziland, Jl S. Afr. Bot., Suppl. 6: 56, 141 (1966) and Fl. Swazild, Jl S. Afr. Bot., Suppl. 11: 388 (1976), non *Arthrosolen ornatus* Meisn. in DC., Prodr. 14: 559 (1857), nec *Gnidia ornata* (Meisn.) Gilg in Engler & Prantl, Natürl. PflFam. 3, 6a: 228 (1894). Type: Swaziland, Hlatikulu, Dec. 1910, M. M. Stewart 14 (K, holo.!).

Because of the existence of the combination *Gnidia ornata* (Meisn.) Gilg for a conspicuous species found only in a few localities in the districts of Caledon and Bredasdorp, a new specific epithet must be given when transferring *Lasiosiphon ornatus* to *Gnidia*. *G. albosericea* is an unpublished name used by Mrs M. Moss on several herbarium labels for this species and I find it appropriate to use the specific epithet of this binomial.

The description of the species is maintained as in the original publication of *L. ornatus* by Burtt Davy.

*G. albosericea* is a grassland species in the eastern Transvaal, the highveld of Swaziland and northern Natal. It is very closely related to *G. splendens* Meisn. and a careful examination of the two species will very likely prove that they are conspecific.

***Gnidia canoargentea* (C.H.Wr.) Gilg in Engl., Pflanzenw. Afr. 3, 2: 634 (1921).**

*Lasiosiphon canoargenteus* C. H. Wr. in T.-Dyer, Fl. Cap. 5, 2: 70 (1915), anglice, et in Kew Bull. 1916: 139 (1916), '*canoargentea*'. Type: Transvaal, Lydenburg District, in clivis montosis Lydenburg. June 1874, *McLea* in Herb. Bolus 3020 (K, lecto., selected by Burtt Davy). Paratype: Transvaal, Witte Kranz, near Lydenburg, Aug. 1885, *Wilms* 1298.

*Lasiosiphon mossii* Burtt Davy, Fl. Transv. 1: 45, 205, 206 (1926). Type: Transvaal, Witwatersrand District, Turffontein, Orange Grove, stony hills, 6. 7. 1919, E. G. Bryant G2 (K, holo.).

E. Gilg seems to have been the first to distinguish this species. He wrote the name *canoargentea* on the herbarium label of a specimen of *Wilms* 1298, apparently in the Berlin Herbarium. On the Kew sheet of *McLea in Herb. Bolus* 3020, N. E. Brown made the following note: '*Gnidia canoargentea* Gilg! Matches the type! (*Wilms* 1298, Witte Kranz near Lydenburg, Transvaal, Aug. 1885). Compared June 17, 1903'. However, the name was not published by Gilg until 1921, by which time the epithet had been used by C. H. Wright in *Lasiosiphon canoargenteus*.

*Lasiosiphon mossii* cannot be distinguished from *Gnidia canoargenteus*. This was observed by Mrs Moss in 1932, who labelled the type specimen of *Lasiosiphon mossii* as *Gnidia canoargentea*. Habit and general appearance are the same in the two species. In his key to *Lasiosiphon* Burtt Davy (1926) distinguishes *L. mossii* from *L. canoargentea* on (among other characters) the linear versus oblong petals, but this character does not hold. In *G. canoargentea* the apex of the petals varies from obtuse to emarginate (sometimes nearly bifid) even in the same flower.

*G. canoargentea* is very close to *G. splendens* Meisn. It is found only in the Transvaal, whereas *G.*

*splendens* has its main distribution in Natal with a few localities in the Transvaal, Swaziland and Lesotho.

***Gnidia propinqua* (Hilliard) Peterson, comb. nov.**

*Basutica propinqua* Hilliard in Notes R. bot. Gdn Edinb. 31: 31 (1971). Type: Lesotho, 1 mile NNW of entrance to Bushman's River Pass, 5. 12. 1967, *Wright* 333 (NU, holo.; E, iso.!).

In addition to the specimens cited in the protologue, a few other collections can be mentioned:

NATAL.—Underberg District, near top of Mashai Pass, c. 2740 m, 7.11.1977, *Hilliard & Burt* 10478 (E). Estcourt District, summit of Drakensberg, in vicinity of Giants Castle Pass, 3170 m, 19.11.1970, *Wright* 1031 (PRE).

LESOTHO.—Mokhotlong District, Sani Top, c. 2860 m, 31.12.1973, *Hilliard* 5408 (E, PRE); Sani Pass Summit, c. 1–2 km N of chalet, c. 2860 m, 13.1.1977, *Killick* 4095 (PRE).

***Gnidia robusta* Peterson, nom. nov.**

*Lasiosiphon nanus* Burt Davy, Fl. Transv. 1: 45, 207 (1926) non *Gnidia nana* (L. f.) Wikstr. in K. svenska Vetensk.-Akad. Handl. 1818: 316 (1818) (endemic in the south-western part of the Cape Province) nec *G. nana* Eckl. & Zeyh, ex Meisn. in DC., Prodr. 14: 583 (1857), quae = *G. sericea* L. Type: Swaziland, Hlatikulu, s. dat., *M. M. Stewart* s.n. (K, holo.!).

*L. robustus* M. Moss ex Compton, nom. non rite publ., Annot. Check List Flora Swaziland, J1 S. Afr. Bot., Suppl. 6: 58 (1966) and Flora Swaziland, J1 S. Afr. Bot., Suppl. 11: 388 (1976).

This species resembles the very variable *Gnidia caffra* (Meisn.) Gilg, but differs in being more robustly branched, more densely leaved and having conspicuous petals, 4–6 mm long × 2–3 mm broad (in *G. caffra* minute, up to 1 mm long).

When comparing the type of *Lasiosiphon nanus* with specimens of *Lasiosiphon robustus* named by Mrs Moss and R. H. Compton it is evident that these species are conspecific. The structure of the flowers in the two species is identical. The type of *L. nanus* consists of only four small branches. This evidently influenced Burt Davy to choose the specific epithet 'nanus', an epithet which cannot be used when transferring *L. nanus* to the genus *Gnidia* because of the prior existence of *G. nana* (L. f.) Wikstr.

*Lasiosiphon robustus* was distinguished and tentatively named by Mrs M. Moss, who worked on the Transvaal Thymelaeaceae for a long time. However, she never published this name, which was later taken up, but not validated by R. H. Compton in his Flora of Swaziland. For some reason Compton failed to mention *L. nanus* either in his Check List or in the Flora of Swaziland.

*Gnidia robusta* is reported from the eastern Transvaal, Swaziland and Natal (Paulpietersburg, Vryheid and Ngotshe Districts).

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