

VITACEAE

A NEW SPECIES OF *RHOICISSUS* FROM NATAL

Rhoicissus sessilifolia Retief, sp. nov., *R. rhomboidea* (E. Mey. ex Harv.) Planch. affinis, sed foliis sessilibus et petiolulo glabro differt.

Planta scandens caulo verrucato; cirrhis glabris. Folia spiraliter disposita, sessilia, glabra, 3-foliolata; foliolis terminalis petiolulatisque distinctis petiolulis 10–20 (27) mm longis, lamina obovata ad elliptica, (35–) 43–70 (–80) mm longa, 19–32 (–40) mm late, apice acuta vel obtusa, base cuneata, margine integro vel 2–3 (aliquando 1) dentato in latero uno vel utrinque; foliolis lateralibus petiolulis brevioribus, petiolulis (1, 2–) 2–3, 5 (6) mm longis, lamina ovata, 20–35 (–47) mm longa, 12, 5–35 mm late, acuminata, base asymmetrica, margine integro vel 2–3 (aliquando 1) dentato in latere uno vel utrinque; pagina inferiore foliolorum omnium venis majoribus prominentibus formantibus venatiorem conspicue reticulatum; acarodomatii interdum in axillis venarum inferarum lateralium. Inflorescentia cyma, folia opposita vel in cirrhis, partibus juvenibus pubescentibus. Calyx cupulatus, Petala 6, glabra, eburnea. Stamina 6, supra ovarium flexa, antheris basifixis, oblongis, 0,5 mm longis. Ovarium in disco immersum; stylo lineare; stigmati simplice, obtuso. Fructus bacca ovoidea, 6–9 mm longus, 8–10 mm latus, ruber juventute, atropurpureus maturitate. Semina globosa c. 5–7 mm longa, 5–6 mm lata, rugosa, sulco longitudinali, latere uno complanato ubi semina binatim.

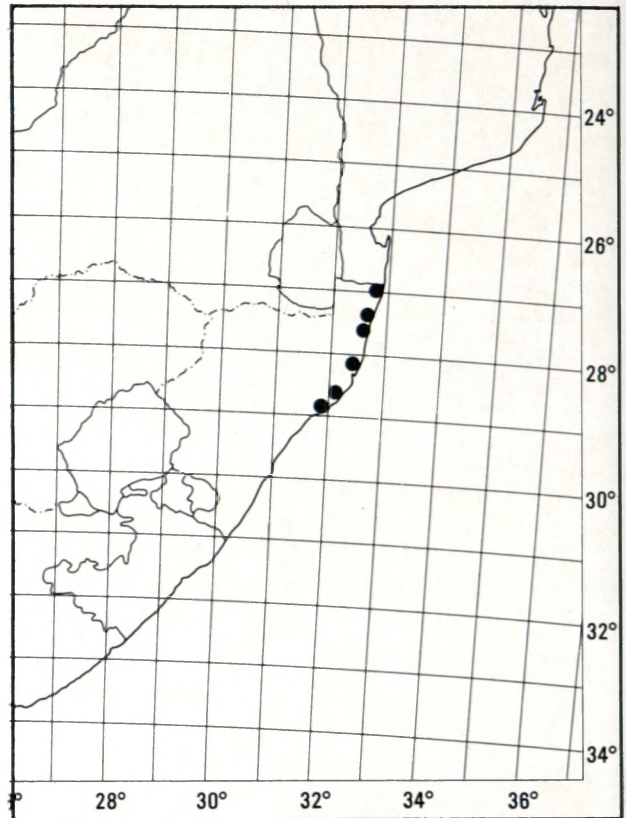


FIG. 16.—Distribution of *Rhoicissus sessilifolia*.

TYPE.—Natal, 2732 (Ubombo): eastern shores of Lake Sibayi (–BC), Moll & Nel 5619 (PRE, holo.)

Climber with warty stems; tendrils glabrous. Leaves spirally arranged, sessile, glabrous, 3-foliolate; terminal leaflets distinctly petioled, petiolules 10–20 (27) mm long, lamina obovate to elliptic, (35–) 43–70 (–80) mm long, 19–32 (–40) mm broad; lateral leaflets with shorter petiolules, petiolules (1, 2) 2–3, 5 (6) mm long, lamina ovate 20–35 (–47) mm long, 12, 5–35 mm broad, acuminate, base asymmetrical, margin entire or with 2–3 (sometimes 1) dentations on both sides, under surface of all leaflets with major veins raised to form a conspicuously reticulate venation; acarodomatia sometimes present in axils of lower lateral veins. Inflorescence a cyme, leaf-opposed or on tendrils, young parts hairy. Calyx cupshaped. Petals 6, glabrous, creamy white. Stamens 6, bending over ovary, anthers basifixed, oblong, 0,5 mm long. Ovary immersed in a disc; style linear; stigma simple, obtuse. Fruit an ovoid berry, 6–9 mm long, 8–10 mm broad, red when young, purplish black when ripe, Seeds globose, c. 5–7 mm long, 5–6 mm broad, rugose, with a longitudinal furrow, one side flattened when seeds in pairs. Fig. 15.

NATAL.—2632 (Bella Vista): coastal dune forest north of Kosi Bay (–DD), Stephen & Van Graan 1295. 2732 (Ubombo): Mandozi Forest, Lake Sibayi (–BC), Vahrmeijer & Hardy 1606; eastern shores of Lake Sibayi (–BC), Moll & Nel 5619; Sordwana Bay (–DA), Tinley 451. 2831 (Nkandla): Umlalazi Nature Reserve (–DD), Moll 4979; Guy & Ward 62. 2382 (Mtubatuba) along Charters Creek, Lake St Lucia (–AB), De Winter 8742; Richards Bay (–CA), Strey 9910; mesic forests near quarry (village area), Richards Bay (–CC), Venter 5549.

R. sessilifolia is endemic to Natal, occurring only in a restricted area (Fig. 16) of coastal dune forest. The first record of the species in the National



FIG. 15.—*Rhoicissus sessilifolia* (Moll & Nel 5619, PRE, holotype).

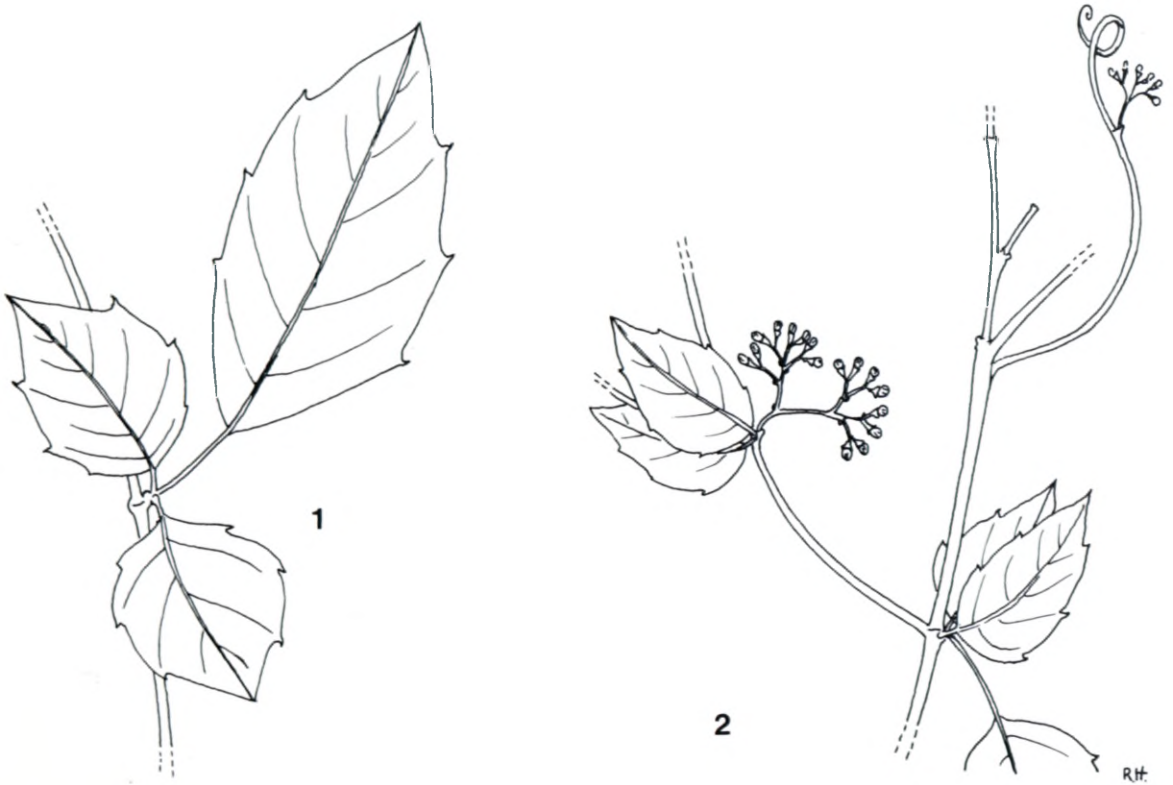


FIG. 17.—*Rhoicissus sessilifolia*. 1, leaf, $\times 1$; 2, part of a branch with an inflorescence on a tendril, $\times 0,5$.

Herbarium was from the Umlalazi Nature Reserve, collected during January 1959 (Guy & Ward 62). For nearly twenty years this remarkable species of *Rhoicissus* has been known, but never correctly assessed until now. All the material cited above has either been identified as *R. rhomboidea* or *R. revoilii* or placed amongst the unnamed specimens. Although *R. rhomboidea* occurs in the distribution area of *R. sessilifolia*, it can be distinguished from the latter species by the distinctive petioles (sometimes up to 35 mm) and long reddish brown hairs on the stems, petioles and peduncles. *R. revoilii* is, in addition a woodland species, often recorded from rocky hillsides.

R. sessilifolia differs from all the other known species of the genus in having sessile compound leaves (Fig. 17). The tendrils of *R. sessilifolia* usually consist of two internodes with an inflorescence often developing at the node. This is also the case in several other species of the genus *Rhoicissus*. According to various authors [see Wild & Drumm. in Fl. Zamb. 2: 493 (1963), Dyer, Gen. 1: 350 (1975)], the genus *Ampelocissus* Planch. differs from *Rhoicissus* in having tendrils which bear inflorescences. The presence or absence of inflorescences on tendrils cannot therefore be used to distinguish between *Ampelocissus* and *Rhoicissus*.

ELIZABETH RETIEF