

POLYGONACEAE

OXYGONUM ALTISSIMUM, A NEW SPECIES FROM CENTRAL SOMALIA

Oxygonum altissimum *Germishuizen*, sp. nov. *O. buchananii* et *O. tristachyo* affinis, sed foliis ovatis valde minoribus, basin cuneatis, in petiolum longum decrescentibus, atque ocrea sine setis longis differt.

TYPE. —Central Somalia, 0346 (Aadan Yabaal District): 30 km S of Aadan Yabaal (—CA), *J.B. Gillett & J.J. Beckett 23264* (K, holo.; EA, MOG). Figure 2.

Slender, erect, much branched shrub, up to 3 m tall. *Branches* glabrous, covered with bloom; older branches grey or red, with bark peeling off in longitudinal flakes, revealing reddish wood beneath. *Ocreae* truncate, up to 10,0 mm long, membranous, white, glabrous, entire or with a few, short, brown, rigid setae on edge. *Leaves* simple, alternate, grey-green, smooth, covered with bloom, narrowly to broadly ovate, cuneate at base, acuminate at

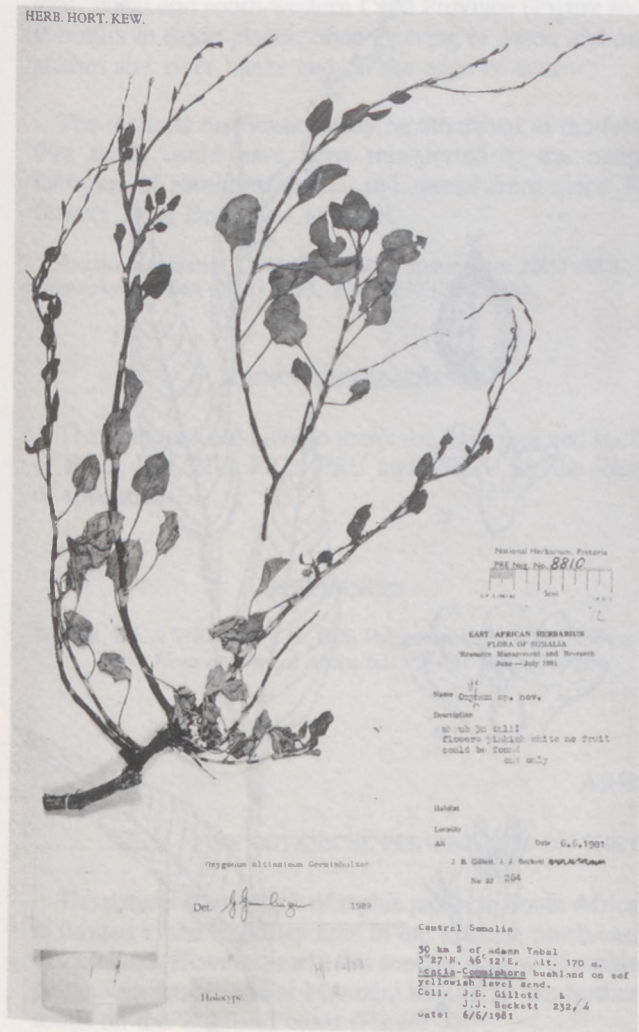


FIGURE 2.—*Oxygonum altissimum* GERMISHUIZEN, holotype.

apex, (13,0–)20,0–28,0 × 10,0–17,5 mm, entire or marginally pubescent with small, white scales, midrib ventrally visible, larger leaves towards stem base. *Inflorescence* a long lax thyrse with fascicles of up to 3 flowers in the axils of brown cuspidate membranous bracts; axis up to 110 mm long. *Perianth* 5-lobed, pinkish white; lobes oblong, up to 5 mm long. *Stamens* 8, included; filaments up to 5 mm long; anthers up to 1 mm long. *Styles* 3, up to 4 mm long, joined for two-thirds of the way; stigmas capitate. *Fruit* immature.

CENTRAL SOMALIA.—0346: 20 km WSW of Aadan Yabaal (–AC), *Kuchar* 17291 (K; PRE); 30 km S of Aadan Yabaal (–CA), *Gillett & Beckett* 23264 (EA; K; MOG).

Oxygonum altissimum is endemic to the sand plain area of Aadan Yabaal District of central Somalia. Found in soft yellowish orange, level sand in *Acacia-Commiphora-Loewia glandulosa* bushland. *O. altissimum* flowers during May and June. It is reported that the leaves of *O. altissimum* are untouched by stock, but occasionally eaten by camels when hungry.

The specific epithet *altissimum* is the Latin word meaning *the tallest*, and is used on recommendation of J.B. Gillett, an allusion to the tall habit these shrubs attain.

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