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Authors: Müller, Jonas, Sieglstetter, Robert, Boni, Yacoubou, and Scholz, Hildemar

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JONAS MÜLLER, ROBERT SIEGLSTETTER, YACOUBOU BONI & HILDEMAR SCHOLZ

Notulae Florae Beninensis – *Beckeropsis laxior* and *Heteranthoecia guineensis (Poaceae)* new for Benin (W Africa)

Abstract

Müller, J., Sieglstetter, R., Boni, Y. & Scholz, H.: Notulae Florae Beninensis – *Beckeropsis laxior* and *Heteranthoecia guineensis (Poaceae)* new for Benin (W Africa). – Willdenowia 32: 237-238. 2002. – ISSN 0511-9618.

The grass species *Beckeropsis laxior* and *Heteranthoecia guineensis* are reported as new to the flora of Benin and are briefly characterised.

Botanical field work of the first two authors in the Atakora mountainous region in northwestern Benin in spring 2001, and a botanical excursion of the third author in central Benin in October 1999 resulted, among others, in the detection of two native grass species, hitherto not reported for Benin (the former Dahomey). One of them, *Heteranthoecia,* represents a new genus for this country. Specimens are deposited in the herbaria of the Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin-Dahlem (B) and the Senckenberg Research Institute, Frankfurt (FR).

Beckeropsis laxior Clayton in Hooker's Ic. Pl.: ad t. 3643. 1967 ≡ *Pennisetum laxior* (Clayton) Clayton in Kew Bull. 32: 580.1978.

Specimens. – BENIN: Département Borgou, Sous-préfecture Tchaourou, Ouari-Maru, Soubakpérou, 9°08'15"N, 2°09'14"E, on rocks, 24.10.1999, *Y. Boni RS 810*, det. H. Scholz (B, FR).

Ic. – Rose Innes 1977: fig. 11 [reprint of Hooker's Ic. Pl. t. 3643].

Description. – Annual. Culms up to 80 cm high, erect, much branched. Leaf blades 8-10 cm long (rarely more), flaccid, the lower ones pseudopetiolate. Inflorescence racemose, 2-4 cm long, terminal on culms and branches forming a compound panicle. Spikelets 3-4 mm long, overlapping, each at base bearing a straight awn-like bristle 1-3 cm long. Glumes 0.2-0.5 mm long, truncate to acute or emarginate. Lemmas scaberulous, the lower barren.

Taxonomy. – The genus *Beckeropsis* Fig. & De Not., tribe *Paniceae* R. Br., distributed with six species in tropical and S Africa, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, is often merged in *Pennisetum* Rich.

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Indeed, the generic limits are not sharp (neither are those of *Pennisetum* in relation to *Cenchrus* L.), but its copious stem branching in combination with pseudopetiolate leaf laminae allow one to follow Tzvelev (1989) and Watson & Dallwitz (1994) in recognising *Beckeropsis* as distinct.

Distribution. – *Beckeropsis laxior* is confined to tropical W Africa, from Ghana to Cameroon, and the Sudan. In Benin it occurs on rock domes and inselbergs. More widespread, and also occurring in Benin, is the similar *B. uniseta* (Nees) K. Schum.; it is a rather robust perennial of wooded grassland, favouring moist and shady places.

Heteranthoecia guineensis (Franch.) Robyns in Bull. Jard. Bot. Etat 9: 201. 1932 ≡ *Dinebra guineensis* Franch. in Bull. Soc. Hist. Nat. Autun 8: 376. 1895

Specimens. – BENIN: Département Atakora, Sous-préfecture Natitingou, Pouya, Chutes de la Kota, 10°12'39"N, 1°26'48"E, south-exposed cliff close to the cataract, 18.2.2001, *R. Sieglstetter & J. Müller RS 652*, det. H. Scholz (B, FR).

Ic. – Clayton & al. 1974: 433, fig. 117; Scholz & Scholz 1983: 226, fig. 65.

Description. – Annual. Culms up to 30 cm, decumbent at base and rooting at the nodes. Leaf blades 1-3 cm long, narrowly lanceolate. Inflorescence racemose, 2-8 cm long, composed of unilateral, spreading or reflexed, 3-12 mm long spikes. Spikelets 1.7- 2.3 mm long, 2-flowered, gaping. Florets (anthoecia) dissimilar, both fertile; inferior lemma hairy only at the base and margins, superior lemma shorter than the inferior one, densely and minutely pubescent all over.

Taxonomy. – The monospecific genus *Heteranthoecia* Stapf belongs to the tribe *Isachneae* Benth., which comprises five genera and is related to the tribe *Paniceae* R. Br.

Distribution. – *Heteranthoecia* is a tropical African genus, distributed from Guinea and Sierra Leone to Nigeria, extending eastwards to Tanzania and southwards to Angola. It occurs in wet places such as pond margins, flooded savannas and swamps at altitudes of c. 1000-1500 m, sometimes also lower.

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Addresses of the authors

Jonas Müller, Robert Sieglstetter, Botanical Institute, J. W. Goethe University Frankfurt, P.O. Box 111932, D-60054 Frankfurt a. M., Germany; e-mail: Jonas.Mueller@em.uni-frankfurt.de, Sieglstetter@gmx.de; fax: (+4969) 798-24702.

Yacoubou Boni, Projet PADEB, P.O. Box 23, Parakou, Benin; e-mail: azur2@nakayo.leland.bj

Hildemar Scholz, Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin-Dahlem, Free University Berlin, Koenigin-Luise-Str. 6-8, D-14191 Berlin, Germany; e-mail: hischo@zedat.fu-berlin.de; fax: (+4930) 838-50186.

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