NOTE ON RHODODENDRON CYANOCARPUM, FRANCH.

By W. W. SMITH, M.A.

(Read 15th January 1914.)

When the late M. Franchet was engaged in describing the numerous Rhododendrons sent by the French missionaries from Western China—the richest area in Rhododendrons in the world,—among the material sent by the Abbé Delavay were a few fruiting specimens of a Rhododendron which Franchet saw was exceedingly near to the Himalayan *R. Thomsoni*, Hook. f. The leaves and calyx of the Yunnan species seemed at first sight identical with those of the Himalayan one. The calyx of *R. Thomsoni* is very distinct from that of any of the other Himalayan species, and the marked similarity to the calyx of the Yunnan plant led Franchet to consider that when flowers of the latter were obtained, the great probability was that the two plants would belong to the same specific type. However, with great acumen, considering the fragmentary material he had to work upon, he noted certain minor points of difference which were his justification for giving a separate name to the Yunnan plant—*R. Thompsoni*,¹ Hook. f., var. *a cyanocarpum*; the varietal name he qualified by putting “species propria” in brackets after it. The species has remained for many years without further elucidation, and only recently additional material, including flowers, has made it possible to justify Franchet’s opinion and to establish Delavay’s plant as a good species.

In the first place, I quote Franchet’s remarks in full²:—

“*Rhododendron Thomsoni*, Hook. f., *Rhod. Sikk. Him.*, tab. 12, *a cyanocarpum* (species propria).

“Frutex in omnibus partibus glaberrimus; folia basi obtusa vel vix distincte subcordata; capsula juvenilis cyanea, matura atrocyanea, pedicellis rigide erectis. Flores ignoti.

“*Hab.*—Yunnan, rochers du Tsang-chan (Delavay, n. 3947, 4166).

“C’est un arbrisseau très tortueux, épais; ses feuilles

¹ Misspelt with a “p” by Franchet.

² “*Journ. de Bot.*,” ix. (1895), 389.

ressemblent beaucoup à celles du *R. Thompsoni*, Hook., mais le plus souvent elles sont seulement obtuses et non échancrées à la base; les bourgeons sont très allongés, aigus, à écailles lâches, fauvepâles, les intérieurs lancéolés, les plus extérieures presque arrondies, ciliolées. Les capsules du *R. Thompsoni* sont penchées et Hooker les dit glauques et pourpres; celles de la variété signalée ici sont d'un bleu foncé à la maturité, glauques, et strictement dressées sur un pédicelle raide. La forme du calice est si semblable et si caractéristique dans les deux plantes que, bien que les fleurs de la variété *cyanocarpum* n'aient pas été encore observées, il y a des probabilités pour qu'elles appartiennent au même type spécifique."

The additional material referred to above consists of three gatherings made by G. Forrest in the Tali Range, Yunnan. These I have compared with Delavay, No. 4166, in the Kew Herbarium, and have no doubt that they are conspecific. In this view I am only following the lead of Professor L. Diels in "Notes Roy. Bot. Gard., Edin.," vii. (1912), 209, where he determines Forrest, No. 4137, as *R. Thomsoni*, Hook. f., var. *cyanocarpum*, Franch., after comparison with the types Delavay, 3947, 4166, at Paris. I give below a more detailed description of the species, with a citation of the sheets known to me.

Rhododendron cyanocarpum, Franch. Descript.
emend. et amplif.

Species valde affinis *Rhododendro Thomsoni*, Hook. f., foliis basi vix cordatulis, floribus majoribus albis, pedicellis fructiferis erectis, inter alia signa recedit.

Frutex 1.5-4 m. altus; ramuli rigidi, cortice griseo tecti, cicatricibus magnis notati; gemmae anguste ellipticae acutiores squamulis inferioribus fere orbicularibus, superioribus ovatis vel lanceolatis, albo-ciliolatis. Folia 6-11 cm. longa, saepius circ. 10 cm., 4.5-7 cm. lata, saepius 6 cm., late elliptica, apice rotundata breviter apiculata, basi rotundata nec cordatula, utraque facie glabra, supra viridia, infra glauca, venis conspicuis purpureis venulisque bene reticulatis notata; petiolus 2-2.5 cm. longus robustus glaber. Flores 3-7-nati, patentes vel subcernui, fragrantés,

pedicellis 1-1.5 cm. longis glabris, bracteis 1-1.5 cm. longis, linearibus stramineis, $\pm$ albo-patenti-ciliatis. Calyx amplus, ad 1.25 cm. longus, cyathiformis, irregulariter 5-lobus, lobis aliis obscuris aliis ad imum petentibus rotundatis vel obtusis, glaucus, nonnunquam purpurascens, glaber, fructu vix auctus. Corolla 5-6.5 cm. longa, late infundibuliformis, alba vel roseo-alba membranacea vix coriacea; tubus 4-4.5 cm. longus, a basi circ. 1.5 cm. lata (in sicco) ad orem circ. 6 cm. latum (in sicco compressum) ampliatus; lobi 5, suborbiculares, 2-3 cm. diametro, breviter emarginati, paulo patentes. Stamina 10, inclusa, tubum vix aequantia, filamentis glabris, antheris brunneis. Ovarium conico-cylindraceum sulcatum glabrum. Fructus 1-1.5 cm. longus, calyce persistente, erectus pedicello stricto, eximie cyaneus.

Yunnan.—“Rochers du Tsang-chan.” Delavay, No. 3947, 4166, ex Franchet in “Journ. de Bot.,” ix. (1895), 389.

“In dumetis montis Tsang-chan. Alt. 3000 m. Species rara in unico loco visa; fructus immaturi eximie cyanei. Flores ignoti.” Delavay, No. 4166, in Herb., Kew!

“Shrub of 8-12 feet. Flowers pinkish-white. Open, moist situations on mountain meadows on the eastern flank of the Tali Range. Lat. 25° 40'. Alt. 10,000-11,000 feet. July 1906.” G. Forrest, No. 4137!

“Shrub of 4-9 feet. Flowers rosy-white, fragrant. Moist mountain meadows on the eastern flank of the Tali Range. Lat. 25° 40'. Alt. 12,000 feet. Aug. 1910.” G. Forrest, No. 6775!

“Shrub 4-6 feet. Flowers creamy-white, pale rose exterior. Margins of pine forests on the eastern flank of the Tali Range. Lat. 25° 40'. Alt. 12,000 feet. June 1910.” G. Forrest, No. 6779!

Rhododendron cyanocarpum, Franch., now that it is more adequately known, is seen to be distinguished from the Himalayan *R. Thomsoni*, Hook. f., by the following chief points:—

1. The leaves are larger, more elliptic, and do not appear to have the “squareness” of outline which is so often seen in *R. Thomsoni*; they are much longer than broad; the bases do not show the small cordate notch characteristic of its ally; the veining is much more conspicuous in the

Yunnan plant; the leaf-buds are more pointed and the scales white-ciliolate.

2. The flowers are white or rosy-white, fragrant, and considerably larger than those of *R. Thomsoni*, which have a beautiful deep blood-colour and are inodorous; the consistency of the corolla of *R. cyanocarpum* is much thinner (in the dry state membranous) and very different from the firm, fleshy texture of *R. Thomsoni*.

3. The ripe fruits are erect on a stiff peduncle, while those of *R. Thomsoni* have a distinct downward curve.

AN HIMALAYAN VARIETY OF *PLUMBAGELLA MICRANTHA*,
SPACH. By W. W. SMITH, M.A.

(Read 9th April 1914.)

Plumbagella micrantha, Spach, the only species known of the genus, was first described in 1829 in Ledebour's "Icones Flor. Ross.," p. 7, under the name of *Plumbago micrantha*, Ledeb., and was accompanied by a good figure (tab. 21).

The genus *Plumbago* was afterwards divided by Spach ("Hist. Veg. Phan.," x. (1841), p. 333) into three genera. Of these, *Plumbago* and *Plumbagella* are retained in Engler's Pflanzenfamilien IV., 1, 122, while *Plumbagidium* is taken as a section of *Plumbago*. *Plumbagella* seems distinct enough generically, with its small funnel-shaped corolla and with its calyx much enlarged after flowering. The habit of the plant is also very different from what we find in *Plumbago*.

I quote Spach's pertinent remarks in support of the validity of his genus *Plumbagella*, as the book in which they occur is one not readily accessible. He points out that it differs from *Plumbago* as follows:—

"1. Par un calice profondément 5-fide, écosté, scarieux seulement aux bords des segments à tube finalement garni de 5 crêtes longitudinales, fougueuses, dentées, alternées avec les segments;

"2. Par une corolle à peine plus longue que le calice, tubuleux-cylindracée, très courtement 5-fide;

"3. Par un style court, à peine aussi long que les stigmates.