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Acanthus Pubescens and A. arboreus

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## LIII.—ACANTHUS PUBESCENS AND A. ARBOREUS.

W. B. TURRILL.

The Tropical African *Acanthaceae* were worked out by the late Mr. C. B. Clarke and published in the *Flora of Tropical Africa* in 1899–1900. On p. 106 of vol. v. of this work he describes *Acanthus arboreus*, Forskal, and reduces as synonymous with it the species *A. polystachyus*, Delile, *A. pubescens*, Engler, and *A. Gaëd*, Lindau, and the variety *pubescens*, T. Thoms., of *A. arboreus*. In naming the *Acanthaceae* of the Kässner Expedition, 1908, it was found that a revision of the synonyms given under and of the characters given for *A. arboreus*, Forsk., in the flora was necessary. The results of the investigation are recorded below.

The degree of hairiness in *A. pubescens*, Engl., and the allied species is not to be relied upon as a specific or even varietal character, but characters which are constant and in accordance with geographical distribution are to be found in the sepals. Before giving the results obtained by the use of these characters it will be well to give a brief historical resumé of the species and their synonyms under discussion. *A. arboreus* was described by Forskal from specimens collected in Arabia. The description is meagre but sufficient to show that *A. pubescens*, Engl., was not the plant meant. The name *A. arboreus* is the name generally accepted for the Abyssinian and Somaliland plant as well as for the Arabian plant. At Kew there is only one specimen (*Schweinfurth* 1112) collected in Arabia and this has only an imperfect calyx. If, however, the Arabian and Abyssinian plants prove to be different the latter must bear the name *A. polystachyus*, Delile, and the name *A. arboreus*, Forsk., must be retained for the former. Thanks to the good figure and description given by Delile (*Cent. Pl. Afr.* 62, t. 1, fig. 2), there can be no doubt as to the identity of his *A. polystachyus* with the common Abyssinian and Somaliland plant at present bearing the name *A. arboreus*, Forsk.

A form of *A. arboreus*, Forsk., has been described by Lindau from Somaliland as *A. Gaëd*. The type specimen, *Hildebrandt* 1399, is at Kew and appears to differ from typical *A. arboreus*, Forsk., only in having smaller flowers. *Acanthus arboreus*, Forsk., var. *pubescens* is first used (as a nomen nudum) in Speke's Nile Journey, Appendix, p. 643. It was shortly described by Oliver in *Trans. Linn. Soc.*, vol. xxix., p. 129. The specimen on which this variety was founded, namely, *Speke and Grant* 136, must be taken as the type of *A. pubescens*, Engler, though that author included under the one name two other specimens one of which, *Steudner* 1532, is merely a pubescent form of *A. arboreus*, Forsk., while the other is not represented at Kew and has not been seen by the writer.

To *A. pubescens*, Engler, must be referred *A. ugandensis*, C. B. Clarke, published in the *Journal of the Linnean Society*, vol. xxxvii., p. 527, and including specimens collected by *Dawe* and *Evan James* in Uganda, and by *C. F. Elliott* in British East Africa. These specimens together with the material from Uganda and British and German East Africa placed by Clarke under *A. arboreus*, Forsk., in the *Flora of Tropical Africa*, and also the

additions received from these countries since the publication of that work compose the Kew material of *A. pubescens*, Engler, as defined in the description below.

*Kässner* 3185 from German East Africa is a form differing slightly from the typical *A. pubescens* in having shorter, somewhat broader and less acuminate bracts.

The following then is the nomenclature and classification of the specimens of these two species represented in the Kew Herbarium :—

*Acanthus arboreus*, *Forsk.* (syn. *A. polystachyus*, *Delile*, probably ; *A. Gäd*, *Lindau*).

Abyssinia. *Schimper* 1534, 1535 ; *Plowden* ; *Steudner* 1532, 1533. Upper Senaar. *Kotschy* 489.

*Acanthus pubescens*, *Engler* (syn. *A. arboreus*, *Forsk.*, var. *pubescens*, *T. Thoms.* ; *A. ugandensis*, *C. B. Clarke*).

Uganda. *Mahon* ; *Dawe* 237 ; *Evan James* ; *Wilson* 94 ; *Mason*. British East Africa. *C. F. Elliott* 244 ; *Scott Elliott* 7057.

German East Africa. *Speke and Grant* 136 ; *Kässner* 3185.

To sum up, the true *Acanthus arboreus*, *Forsk.*, if identical with *A. polystachyus*, *Delile*, is a plant of Arabia, Abyssinia, and Somaliland, while *A. pubescens*, *Engler*, has a more southern range, being common in Uganda and having been several times collected in British and German East Africa.

There is one point which owing to the lack of material has not been completely cleared up. In *Trans. Linn. Soc.*, vol. xxix., p. 129, there is under *Acanthus arboreus*, *Forsk.*, var. *pubescens*, a note by *Col. Grant* to the effect that the seeds of this plant are "covered with a down which makes the fingers itch." *Speke* and *Grant's* specimen at Kew contains no seed. However, in a capsule mounted on the same sheet as the specimen collected by *Miss Mason* in Uganda is a single seed and this is completely covered with stiff brown hairs which, like the well-known hairs on the fruits of species of *Mucuna*, come off easily on to the hands when rubbed and in any quantity would no doubt cause a noticeable irritation. Hence it seems that there is here another, probably constant, character for distinguishing *A. pubescens* from *A. arboreus* for the seeds of the latter are flat, smooth, and shining.

*Acanthus pubescens*, *Engler*, *Hochgebirgs Fl. Trop. Afr.* (1892), p. 390 (Acanthaceae-Acanthoideae) ; descriptionem ampliata confecit, *W. B. Turritt* ; *A. arboreo*, *Forsk.*, affinis, sed bracteis minoribus, sepalis lateralibus latis saepissime obtusis marginibus molliter ciliatis praecipue differt.

*Planta* erecta, 1–3 m. alta, caulibus subquadrangularibus glabris vel plus minusve pubescentibus. *Folia* ambitu elliptico-lanceolata, apice acuta spinescentia, basi cordata vel rotundata, usque ad 20 cm. longa, 9 cm. lata, subcoriacea, glabra vel plus minusve pubescentia, irregulariter lobata, lobis spinescentibus, nervis secundariis utrinque usque ad 14 pagina utraque conspicuis, petiolis 1–2 cm. longis. *Spicae* multiflorae ; bracteae ovatae, apice acutae vel acuminatae usque ad 2 mm. longae, 1.5 mm. latae, pagina utraque dense puberulae, marginibus spinescentes ; bracteolae lineari-lanceolatae, apice acuminatae, 1.5 cm. longae, 2–3 mm. latae, pagina utraque puberulae,

marginibus superne spinescentibus. *Sepala* 4, obtusa, dorso plus minusve pubescentia, distincte molliter ciliata; anticum oblongo-ovatum, apice denticulatum vel integrum, usque ad 1.5 cm. longum, 9 mm. latum; posticum ovatum, usque ad 1.5 cm. longum, 1.1 cm. latum; lateralia elliptico-ovata, 1 cm. longa, 7 mm. lata. *Corollae* tubus 7 mm. longus, durus, extra glaber, intus dense pubescens; limbus 5-lobatus, pubescens, usque ad 3.5 cm. longus, 3.5 cm. latus. *Stamina* 4, filamentis inter se aequalibus 2 cm. longis glabris, antheris 5 mm. longis dense ciliatis; pollinis granula longe ellipsoidea, 50  $\mu$  longa, 30  $\mu$  diametro. *Discus* 0.5 mm. altus. *Ovarium* 2 mm. altum, 1 mm. diametro, glabrum; stylus 2.5 cm. longus, glaber, apice breviter et aequaliter bifidus. *Acanthus arboreus*, *Forsk.*, var. *pubescens*, *Thoms*, in *Speke's Nile Journey, Appendix*, p. 643, and *Oliv.* in *Trans. Linn. Soc. vol. xxix.*, p. 129. *A. arboreus*, *C. B. Clarke* in *Fl. Trop. Afr. vol.*, v., p. 106, pro parte minore, non *Forsk.* *A. ugandensis*, *C. B. Clarke*, in *Journ. Linn. Soc. xxxvii.*, p. 527.

TROPICAL AFRICA. Uganda: Botanic Station, Entebbe, "forms a bush 10 ft. high with handsome, pink, very showy flowers, common," *A. Mahon*; Buddu, 1170 m. altitude, "a white flowered variety," *M. T. Dave* 237; Elgon District, *Sir Evan James*; between Entebbe and Kampala, *Miss M. Mason*; without exact locality, "a stout shrubby plant, branched, 3-7 ft. high, flowers pink. Roadsides and grassland, Uganda, very common. I have also seen a variety with white flowers but have no specimen," *Rev. C. T. Wilson* 94; without exact locality, "very handsome pink Acanthacea all over Uganda and Unyoro, 12-15 ft. high," *M. S. Evans* 737; British East Africa: Kavirondo, Nandi Range, "a tall shrubby plant, wet ground," *Scott Elliot* 7057; Mutagaru, Kakameja Forest, "a very common shrub as undergrowth in forests in Nyanza Province and parts of Uganda," altitude 1350-1500 m., *J. L. Moon* 572; without exact locality, *C. F. Elliott* 244; German East Africa: Usui (Ussuwi) in Uzinza (Usindja) District, *Speke and Grant*, 136; Ruzizi Valley in the open plain, *Küssner* 3185.

#### LIV.—NEW ORCHIDS; DECADE 41.

401. *Megaclinium ugandae*, *Rolfe*; a *M. endotrachyde*, *Kränzl.*, scapo brevior, sepalis lateralibus acuminatis et petalis latioribus differt.

*Herba* epiphytica. *Pseudobulbi* tetragoni, conico-oblongi, 5 cm. longi, 1.6 cm. lati, diphylli. *Folia* oblonga vel elliptico-oblonga, subobtusata, 7 cm. longa, 2 cm. lata, subcoriacea. *Scapus* circiter 12 cm. longus, basi vaginis tubulosis obtectus; rachis oblonga, acutangula, 6.7 cm. longa, 8 mm. lata, nervo mediano eccentrico. *Bractee* triangulares, acuminatae, acutae, reflexae, 3-4 mm. longae. *Pedicelli* 5-6 mm. longi. *Flores* circiter 2 cm. distantes, parvi. *Sepalum* posticum suberectum, subspathulato-oblongum, obtusum, 7 mm. longum; sepalia lateralia late triangularia, reflexa, acuminata, 6-7 mm. longa; mentum subsacatum, 2 mm. longum. *Petala*