



## *Jumellea recurva* (Orchidaceae): not a rediscovery in Mauritius

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In *Phytotaxa* 29: 56–60, Sevathian (2011) reported that *Jumellea recurva* (Thouars) Schltr., said to be a Mauritius and Réunion endemic orchid considered extinct on Mauritius since 1822 has been relocated by the author in February 2011 during a survey in the forest of Bel Ombre in the south of Mauritius. As biologists working in a region with one of the most endangered floras in the world (Walter & Gillet 1998), we would rejoice to hear of this kind of botanical finding and would like to encourage authors in their work. However, we noted several inaccuracies in this particular report which unfortunately combine to radically change the principal message of that paper.

It is not correct to assert that *Jumellea recurva* was first found in Mauritius in 1822 by Thouars and never found thereafter until the author's rediscovery. Thouars was in Mauritius between 1793 to around 1802; the year 1822 refers to the date of publication of his seminal book (Thouars 1822), the specimen must have been collected at latest in 1802. The species was also collected several times in Mauritius between Thouars collection and 2011 (see below). In addition the orchid is not endemic to Mauritius and La Réunion, as it is also known from Madagascar (as communicated by email to Sevathian by Thierry Paillet (TP) in April 2011). Sevathian also stated that Bojer (1837) reported not to have seen the species himself. This is however incorrect as Bojer reported the orchid to 'grow on trees and rocks in dark areas of the thick forests towards the centre of the island and flowering in February and March'. Instead, it was S. Moore (in Baker 1877: 351) who stated that he did not see any sample. There seem therefore to have been confusion between these two 19<sup>th</sup> century Floras of Mauritius. But most importantly, in addition to Bojer (1837), both the literature and herbarium collections report many records of the species to have been made in Mauritius apart from the collection by Thouars. Several of these were made between 1822 and the alleged relocation year of 2011. Therefore, the species could not have been considered extinct in Mauritius after 1822 as reported in Sevathian. A sample made in 1902 from a plant originally from Mauritius but cultivated in the UK is held at K. Together with that sample is a painting of *J. recurva* made by James Duncan (who was in Mauritius between 1849 and 1866). Next to his painting, Duncan noted that the species is 'found at Nouvelle Découverte and Villebague on rocks among small trees where it is not over shaded'. Roberts (2001) also mentioned collections of *J. recurva* made in Mauritius in the 1930s and 1970s. Another old sample from Mauritius without collector name, locality and collection date is held at MAU. However several other samples had more precise collection data: Vaughan collected the species in 1933 near Perrier, Guého collected it in 1965 in Grand Bassin, Bosser sampled a specimen from Bel Ombre in 1976 (possibly therefore from the same population as Sevathian's original find), Lamusse sampled it from Les Mares in 1988 and more recently a sample was collected from Pétrin in 2004 by Pynee *et al.* Determination of all these samples apart from the K sample were made in 2009 by TP as part of the ongoing revision of the Orchidaceae of the region for the *Flore des Mascareignes* project (Bossier *et al.* 1976-onwards). When Sevathian contacted TP for information about *J. recurva* and to inform of his intentions to publish his 'rediscovery', TP pointed out that the situation was not so simple and that there had been confusion between *J. recurva* and other *Jumellea* species in the past and