



Article

Modern sequels to the Kaiserin-Augusta-Fluss itinerary of Carl Ledermann: *Rhysotoechia welzeniana* sp. nov. (Sapindaceae), a remarkable species from the upper Sepik of Papua New Guinea

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Abstract

Rhysotoechia welzeniana (Sapindaceae) is described from the April River in Papua New Guinea, one of the classical localities on the Kaiserin-Augusta-Fluss itinerary of 1912–13. The new species is the first dioecious member of its genus and the only one with foliage consisting entirely of simple leaves.

Key words: April River, classical localities

Introduction

The family Sapindaceae is represented in New Guinea by a rich conspectus, of which a significant portion is hardly ever seen by collectors. *Rhysotoechia* Radlkofer (1879: 656) is probably the rarest of these uncommon elements. The seven *Rhysotoechia* species endemic to the mainland were revised by Etman (1994a, 1994b) on the basis of only 15 collections. Most of the east Malesian congeners are still known from just one or two specimens.

Because of its extreme rarity, the author and his Momase tree climbers (D. Ama, A. Gambia, T. Jisaka, A. Towati) have long followed a collect-on-sight procedure with respect to *Rhysotoechia*. Fertile collections are never declined. During recent surveys of type localities from the Kaiserin-Augusta-Fluss Expedition (1912–13; see site tabulation in Veldkamp *et al.* 1988), a bizarre representative of this group was discovered near the historical Kamelsrücken on the April River (a major tributary of the Augusta-Fluss). The unusual characters exhibited by the new plant will require a redefinition of the genus.

Methods

Unless indicated otherwise, the taxonomic descriptions refer to attributes on dried specimens. Characters determined in situ from living plants are reported separately as "field characters".

The cited disposition of duplicates are intended distributions to be effected after publication. Silica-dried leaf samples have been inserted with the A, L, and LAE duplicates (*Takeuchi et al.* 26240) for specialist use in DNA-sequencing studies.