Phytotaxa 87 (3): 50–60 (2013)
www.mapress.com/phytotaxa/

Article

ISSN 1179-3155 (print edition)
PHYTOTAXA
ISSN 1179-3163 (online edition)

http://dx.doi.org/10.11646/phytotaxa.87.3.3

Trimelopter craibii (Hyacinthaceae, Ornithogaloideae), a new species from the North West Province of South Africa

MARIO MARTÍNEZ-AZORÍN[1], MANUEL B. CRESPO[1] & ANTHONY P. DOLD[2]

[1] *CIBIO (Instituto Universitario de la Biodiversidad), Universidad de Alicante, P. O. Box 99, E-03080 Alicante, Spain. E-mail: mmartinez@ua.es*

[2] *Selmar Schonland Herbarium, Department of Botany, Rhodes University, Grahamstown 6140, South Africa.*

Abstract

The genus *Trimelopter* has been recently reinstated to include *Ornithogalum unifolium* and other closely related species from Southern Africa, comprising up to 10 species. Within the context of a revision of *Trimelopter*, a new species, *T. craibii*, is here formally described to name plants discovered by the late Charles Craib in the North West Province of South Africa. This taxon is closely related to *T. dyeri* and *T. unifolium*, but it can be clearly differentiated by floral and vegetative characters. Data on morphology, ecology, and distribution are reported for this new species, and affinities and divergences with other closely related taxa are also discussed. The new combination *T. unifolium* var. *vestitum* is also proposed.

Key words: Asparagaceae, distribution, ecology, Hyacintheae, Scilloideae, taxonomy, *Trimelopter unifolium* var. *vestitum*

Introduction

The family Hyacinthaceae includes about 1000 species of bulbous plants which are mainly distributed throughout Europe, Africa and south-west Asia, with a single small genus in South America (APG 2003). Alternatively, Hyacinthaceae is treated as subfamily Scilloideae of Asparagaceae, and the subfamilies above are then treated as tribes Hyacintheae, Ornithogaleae, Oziroëeae and Urgineeae (e.g. APG 2009, Chase *et al.* 2009).

Generic circumscription within Hyacinthaceae subfam. Ornithogaloideae has been a matter of controversy during the last couple of decades. The latest comprehensive study in the group (cf. Martínez-Azorín *et al.* 2011) demonstrated the existence of up to 19 monophyletic genera which are characterized by a clear syndrome of morphological characters, making genus concepts intuitive, homogeneous in floral morphology, and therefore easy to define and to work with.

The genus *Trimelopter* Rafinesque (1837: 24) currently includes 10 species and is characterized by the presence of a single, elliptic to narrowly oblong leaf (exceptionally two or three leaves), usually flattened against the ground. The ovaries have two usually prominent longitudinal dorsal keels in each carpel and the seeds are unequally compressed or semi-discoid (cf. Dyer 1931, Leighton 1944, Obermeyer 1978, Martínez-Azorín *et al.* 2011).

The peculiar morphology of these plants allowed various authors to treat them at different taxonomic ranks. Rafinesque (1837) described the genus *Trimelopter*, including a single species, *Trimelopter fuscatum* (Jacquin 1795: 19) Rafinesque (1837: 24) (= *Ornithogalum fuscatum* Jacq.), which is currently regarded as a synonym of *T. unifolium* (Retzius 1781: 17) Martínez-Azorín *et al.* (2011: 26) (= *O. unifolium* Retz.). The genus *Ardernia* Salisbury (1866: 35) is also based on *O. fuscatum* and it is therefore to be considered

 Accepted by Lorenzo Peruzzi: 26 Feb. 2013; published online in PDF: 15 Mar. 2013