



Massonia obermeyeræ (Asparagaceae, Scilloideae), a new species from South Africa

MARIO MARTÍNEZ-AZORÍN^{1,2}, ANTHONY P. DOLD³, MICHAEL PINTER¹, JULIAN M. SLADE⁴, MANUEL B. CRESPO², GOTTFRIED MILKUHN⁵ & WOLFGANG WETSCHNIG^{1*}

¹Institute of Plant Sciences, NAWI Graz, Karl-Franzens-University Graz, Holteigasse 6, A-8010, Graz, Austria;
e-mail: wolfgang.wetschnig@uni-graz.at

²dCARN & CIBIO (Instituto Universitario de la Biodiversidad), Universidad de Alicante, P.O. Box 99, E-03080 Alicante, Spain.

³Selmar Schonland Herbarium, Department of Botany, Rhodes University, Grahamstown 6140 South Africa.

⁴P.O. Box 1182, Mount Barker SA 5251, Australia.

⁵Weinbergstr. 8, D-01156 Dresden, Germany

*author for correspondence

Abstract

As part of a taxonomic revision of the genus *Massonia*, a new species, *M. obermeyeræ* is here described from South Africa. This species is at first sight similar to *M. depressa*, but it differs in the inflorescence and flower morphology, as well as its distribution. A complete morphological description of the new species and data on biology, habitat, and distribution are presented. Comments on typification of *Massonia grandiflora*, a name that has been misapplied to *M. obermeyeræ*, are also presented, including the identification of a previously designated lectotype and a newly selected epitype.

Key words: Flora of Southern Africa, Hyacinthaceae, Massonieae, nomenclature, taxonomy, typification

Introduction

Subfamily Scilloideae tribe Hyacintheae is alternatively regarded as Hyacinthaceae subfam. Hyacinthoideae, a treatment that we favour here (cf. Martínez-Azorín *et al.* 2014a). Further information on subfamily Hyacinthoideae and generic circumscriptions can be found in Martínez-Azorín *et al.* (2013, 2014a, 2014b), Pinter *et al.* (2013) and Wetschnig *et al.* (2014).

The genus *Massonia* Houttuyn (1780: 424) was described to include a single species, *Massonia depressa* Houttuyn (1780: 424). The type of this species (Houttuyn 1780: Plate LXXXV), illustrates two flowers that shows the perigone fused for about the lower half forming a wide, funnel-shaped tube, and reflexed free portions of the perigone with a sigmoid curve at the base. The suberect filaments are connate at the base forming a ring above the perigone, the ovary is oblong, and the style is long, narrow and erect, and sharply differentiated from the ovary. For an overview on the generic circumscription of *Massonia* and the number of taxa accepted in this genus see Martínez-Azorín *et al.* (2014b).

Recent studies based on molecular data included *Whiteheadia* Harvey (1868: 396) in the synonymy of *Massonia* (Manning *et al.* 2004, 2011). This proposal was based on the paraphyly of *Whiteheadia* when comprising both *Whiteheadia bifolia* (Jacquin 1791: 215) Baker (1872: 226) and *W. etesionamibensis* Müller-Doblies & Müller-Doblies (1997: 82). We choose here to accept *Whiteheadia* as a monotypic, monophyletic genus to include only *W. bifolia*. A study is in preparation which will present a new alternative proposal for the taxonomy of *W. etesionamibensis* (M. Martínez-Azorín and collaborators, in preparation).

Massonia grandiflora Lindley (1826: t. 958) was described and illustrated (Fig. 1) “from a plant in Mr. Colvill’s Nursery, which had been brought from the Cape of Good Hope by Mr. Synnet [Walter Synnot cf. Gunn & Codd 1981]”. This species is characterized by the large, smooth leaves; large, ovate, acuminate bracts; flowers with a white, funnel-shaped tube and white, reflexed perigone segments; filaments erect, green, fused at the base to form a ring; and a spirally twisted style.

As explained by Obermeyer (1965), Mr. W. Synnot was a magistrate at Clanwilliam (Western Cape of South Africa), so the type locality of this species is likely to be somewhere in the vicinity of Clanwilliam (cf. Müller-

To avoid confusion on the application of that name, we here select the sheet CGE00078 as epitype (Art. 9.8, ICN), in support of the previously designated lectotype, where some distinctive characters are either missing or not detailed enough to ensure unequivocal identification.

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