

THE NAME *BEGONIA SINUATA*

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ABSTRACT. It is shown that *Begonia sinuata* [Wall. ex] Meisn. is the correct name for a Malayan begonia; the South African species *B. sinuata* Otto & Dietr. (= *B. caffra* Meisn.) must be called *B. homonyma* Steud.

In the original volume of *Index Kewensis* there are three entries under *Begonia sinuata*. One of these (Wall. Cat. 3680) refers to a Malayan plant, the other two (E. Mey. ex Otto & Dietr. in *Allgem. Gartenz.* 4: 357, and Graham in *Edinb. New. Phil. Journ.* 24: 192) to a South African one. The respective dates of these publications are 1831, 1836 and 1838. Graham's name clearly refers to the same plant that was described by Otto & Dietrich; he had received a plant under this name from Berlin Botanic Garden and published it, evidently unaware that Otto & Dietrich had already done so.

Wallich's name, as published in his *Numerical List* (=Catalogue), was a *nomen nudum*; as so often the name passed into general use without the describing author being clearly designated. A. De Candolle (in *DC.*, *Prodr.* 15: 354, 1864) is the earliest author cited in *Floras*, but search has shown that the plant was discussed by Meisner in a paper read to the *Botanische Gesellschaft* at Basel in July 1836. The published account (*Ber. Verhandl. Naturf. Ges. Basel* 2: 42, Aug. 1836) gives some scanty descriptive data which is, nonetheless, sufficient to validate the name. This publication antedates by 3 months that of *B. sinuata* [E. Mey. ex] Otto & Dietrich, which is dated 5 Nov. 1836, and establishes the name *B. sinuata* [Wall. ex] Meisn. for the Malayan species. This has, indeed, been known almost continuously as *B. sinuata* Wall. W. G. Craib, however, evidently observed that *B. sinuata* Wall. was a *nomen nudum*; he was unaware of Meisner's use of the name and therefore replaced *B. sinuata* Wall. by *B. biloculare* (Wight) Craib (1931), based on *Diploclinium biloculare* Wight (1852). Somewhat fortunately this name change, published without comment in a floristic list, has not been adopted by subsequent authors.

Since *B. sinuata* Wall. had general acceptance, we find that the South African plant was twice renamed. Meisner (in *Linnaea* 14: 501) replaced *B. sinuata* Otto & Dietr. by *B. caffra* Meisn., and Steudel (*Nomencl. ed.* 2, 194) proposed *B. homonyma* to supersede *B. sinuata* Graham. The title-pages of these publications suggest that Meisner acted in 1840, Steudel in 1841. However, consultation of Stafleu's invaluable *Taxonomic Literature* reverses the position. The relevant page of Steudel is allocated to Aug. 1840 while Meisner's name did not appear till 1841. Steudel's rather ugly epithet must therefore be adopted.

One final comment on the literature may be made. Alphonse De Candolle recognized two varieties under *B. dregei* Otto & Dietr., which is considered a distinct species. They were β *sinuata* and γ *caffra*, based on Graham's *B. sinuata* and Meisner's *B. caffra* respectively. Both these species names being technically illegitimate the varieties should be attributed to A.DC.

alone. However the typification is clear: var. *sinuata* is typified by the Berlin plant grown at Edinburgh and described by Graham; var. *caffra* is based on the Berlin plant described by Otto & Dietrich. The sources of the two were the same. A. De Candolle's only difference was that the fruits of var. *caffra* were larger. Curiously he makes no mention of *B. sinuata* Otto & Dietr.

The full synonymy and references for these two plants are therefore:—

Begonia sinuata [Wall., Num. List. no. 3680 (1831), nomen nudum, ex] Meisn. in Ber. Verhandl. Naturf. Ges. Basel 2: 42 (Aug. 1836), et in Linnaea, Lit.-Ber. 15 (1838); A.DC., Prodr. 15: 354 (1864); C.B.Cl. in Hook.f., Fl. Brit. Ind. 2: 650 (1879); Gagnep. in Lecomte, Fl. Gén. Indo-Chine 2: 1205 (1921); Ridl., Fl. Mal. Pen. 1: 856 (1922); Irmscher in Mitt. Inst. Bot. Hamburg 8: 139 (1929).

Syn.: *Diploclinium biloculare* Wight, Ic. Pl. Ind. Or. 5(2): 9, t. 1814 (1852).

Begonia bilocularis (Wight) Craib, Fl. Siam. Enum. 1: 771 (1931).

Irmscher recognizes no less than 8 varieties of this species from the Malay Peninsula, one of them based on *B. clivalis* Ridl. (1910, non 1911). The species has also been recorded from Thailand, Cambodia and S Vietnam.

Begonia homonyma Steudel, Nomencl. ed. 2, 194 (Aug. 1840).

Syn.: *B. sinuata* [E. Mey. ex] Otto & Dietr. in Allg. Gartenz. 4: 357 (5 Nov. 1836)—non [Wall. ex] Meisn. (Aug. 1836).

B. sinuata Graham in Edinb. New Phil. Journ. 24: 192 (1838) et in Bot. Mag. t. 3731 (1839)—non [Wall. ex] Meisn. (Aug. 1836).

B. caffra Meisn. in Linnaea 14: 501 (1841); Sond. in Harv. & Sond., Fl. Cap. 2: 481 (1862); Irmscher in Bot. Jahrb. 81: 136 (1961).

B. dregei var. *caffra* A.DC., Prodr. 15: 384 (1864).

B. dregei var. *sinuata* A.DC., Prodr. 15: 384 (1864).

This species is a native of south-eastern Africa: from eastern Cape Province (Transkei) to Natal, and is closely allied to *B. dregei* Otto & Dietr.