STUDIES IN THE GESNERIACEAE OF THE OLD WORLD XLII: AESCHYNANTHUS IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

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ABSTRACT. A new species of *Aeschynanthus*, *A. solomonensis* P. Woods, is described from the Solomon Islands. The only species of the genus represented in the Islands, it appears to be most closely related to *A. vinaceus* P. Woods from Sarawak; it is assigned to Sect. *Microtrichium* C.B. Cl.

Aeschynanthus solomonensis P. Woods, **species nova** e sectione *Microtrichio* ab *A. vinaceo* P. Woods sarawakensi foliis minoribus et corollis pallidioribus intus prope basin annulo pilorum interrupto praeditis recedens.

Suffrutex epiphyticus; caules ramosi, penduli, ad 1·8 m longi, internodiis ad 5·5 cm. *Folia* petiolis usque ad 8 mm; lamina ovata vel ovato-elliptica vel lanceolata, interdum costa curvata itaque inaequilateralis, 5–6·7 × 1·5–3·6 cm, apice acuminato, basi cuneata interdum late cuneata raro rotundata. *Flores* singuli, raro bini, axillares; bracteolae subulatae, 1·75 mm longae, pilis paucis brevibus apicalibus; pedicelli 10 mm usque, glabri. *Calyx* (2·5–)5–17 mm longus, plerumque glaber, tubo (2–)4–6 mm longo, lobis breviter triangularibus vel linearibus acutis 0·5–6·5 (typice)–11 × 1–2 mm, sinubus obtusis. *Corolla* arcuata, rosea, intus pallidior, 30–47 mm longa, basi 3 mm diametro ore 15 mm, utrinque glabra pilis papillosis prope sinus et in fauce et annulo interrupto pilis fasciculatis 6 mm supra tubi basin exceptis; lobi superiores oblongi, 6–7 × 7–8 mm, inferiores 8 × 10 mm, marginibus glanduloso-ciliatis. *Stamina* 4; filamenta ad 18 mm longa, per maximam partem glanduloso-pubescentia; antherae 2·25 × 1 mm, apicibus inter se cohaerentibus. *Staminodium* 1 mm longum. *Ovarium* ad 30 mm longum; stylus ad 7 mm longus, glandulosus. *Capsula* ad 15 cm longa.

SOLOMON ISLANDS. San Cristobal: on trees overhanging river, pendulous, c. 2 m long, corolla rose-pink, paler inside, filaments white, style yellow, 45 m, 28 vii 1965, *Hunt* RSS 2254 (holo. E; iso. K); ridge E of Pegato, corolla cerise, 600 m, 3 viii 1965, *Sore* RSS 2311 (E, K). Bougainville: 6° 27′S, 155° 40′E, mts near Bokarkani, 1060 m, flowers red, 12 ii 1967, *Lavarack & Ridsdale* NGF 31581 (E); 6° 15′S, 155° 30′E, Pavairi, flowers red, 518 m, 24 i 1967, *Lavarack & Ridsdale* NGF 31177 (E); *ibid.*, flowers red, tube flecked at mouth, local name 'Lachnave', 850 m, 16 i 1967, *Lavarack & Ridsdale* NGF 30592A (E). New Georgia Group, Vangunu: crater rim, inland from Merusu Islet, flowers dull red, 600 m, 9 xii 1962, *Whitmore* BSIP 990 (K). Santa Isabel: Maringe Lagoon, near Tiratona village, dense climbing mass at 12 m up a tree, corolla pink with red blotches, c. 25 m, 22 x 1963, *Whitmore* BSIP 2308 (K). Guadalcanal: Mt Gallego, eastern slopes, ridge forest, leaves rich green on upper surface, whitish green under surface, calyx green shaded red, corolla rich pink, stamens creamy yellow, 450 m, 8 vii 1965, *Whitmore* RSS 2082 (E, K); *ibid.*, near summit, 1050 m, lower surface of leaves with some magenta colouring, flowers red, 16 ix 1966, *Dennis* BSIP 4626 (K); Duidui area, climber 3 m high, flowers red, 600 m, 8 x 1968, *Mauriasi & collectors* BSIP 12049 (K).

Despite considerable variation in calyx length, all the gatherings cited above seem to belong to the only species of *Aeschynanthus* known from the Solomon Islands. Specimens with shorter calyces occur at the more western end of the distribution, on Bougainville, Vangunu and Santa Isabel, whilst those with longest lobes occur on San Cristobal. Both short and long calyx types occur on Guadalcanal. With only limited material available for examination it is premature to suggest that there is a significant correlation between calyx length and distribution, but attention is drawn to this feature by tabulating the collections in a west to east sequence (table 1).

TABLE 1

LENGTHS OF THE CALYX LOBES

Island	*Calyx lobe in mm*	*Specimen*	
Bougainville	1	*Lavarack & Ridsdale*	NGF 31177
Bougainville	1	*Lavarack & Ridsdale*	NGF 31581
Vangunu	3	*Whitmore*	BSIP 990
Santa Isabel	0·5	*Whitmore*	BSIP 2308
Guadalcanal	2·75	*Whitmore*	RSS 2082
NW Guadalcanal	1·75	*Dennis*	BSIP 4626
SW Guadalcanal	6–8	*Mauriasi*	BSIP 12049
San Cristobal	6·5	*Hunt*	RSS 2254
San Cristobal	11	*Sore*	RSS 2311

The affinity of the new species appears to be with *A. vinaceus* P. Woods from Sarawak because in both the calyx has a distinct tube. Usually in sect. *Microtrichium* the calyx is divided to the base and the outside of the corolla tube is at least puberulous. In *A. solomonensis* and *A. vinaceus*, the outside of the corolla is glabrous and this character they share with several western Malesian species—*A. longicalyx* Ridl., *A. magnificus* Stapf and *A. rhododendron* Ridl. If the New Guinea species *A. guttatus* P. Woods and *A. musaensis* P. Woods with tubular calyces and glabrous corollas are added to the foregoing as well as *A. pachyanthus* Schlecht. (which Schlechter placed in his monotypic sect. *Anisocalyx*), a fairly natural grouping results. Furthermore, in all these species where the seed appendage has been observed, it is rather longer in the species with tubular calyces than the shorter, broader-based appendage of the species with deeply divided calyces. There are thus indications that these species may represent a group distinct from sect. *Microtrichium* (cf. Burtt & Woods in Notes R.B.G. Edinb. 33:477, 1975).

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