

(29) Request for a binding decision on whether *Ceropegia oculata* Hook. and *C. occulta* R.A. Dyer (*Apocynaceae*) are sufficiently alike to be confused

Sameer Patil & P. Lakshminarasimhan

Botanical Survey of India, Western Regional Centre, 7 Koregaon Road, Pune – 411 001, Maharashtra, India

Author for correspondence: Sameer Patil, sameerpatil.c@gmail.com

DOI <http://dx.doi.org/10.12705/645.29>

***Ceropegia oculata* Hook. (1844) [Angiosp.: Asclepiad. / Apocyn.]**

Hooker (in Bot. Mag. 70: t. 4093. 1844) proposed *Ceropegia oculata* Hook. as a new species; his description was based on plants raised at Kew from seeds sent from Mumbai, India. This species is endemic to Western Ghats of India.

***Ceropegia occulta* R.A. Dyer (1958) [Angiosp.: Asclepiad. / Apocyn.]**

Dyer (in Bothalia 7: 21. 1958) proposed *Ceropegia occulta* R.A. Dyer for a South African endemic taxon, which is restricted to its type locality in the Cape Province. Furthermore, it is also considered as a threatened species (Raimondo & al., Red List S. African Pl.; accessed 24 Aug 2015 at: <http://redlist.sanbi.org/search.php?sppsearch=Ceropegia+occulta>).

Problem

Although *C. oculata* Hook. and *C. occulta* R.A. Dyer are spelled somewhat similarly, their epithets refer to different aspects (*oculata* = eye-shaped, alluding to eye-like spots on the corolla; *occulta* = well-hidden, alluding to the habitat of the species). In spite of occurring in different continents, occasionally there has been confusion in literature and the two epithets have been used incorrectly in an autonym varietal name. For example, World Conservation Monitoring Centre (Checklist CITES Sp.: 261. 1998) and Fragoso & al. (Succ.

Pl. Trade Wild: 94. 1999) show *C. oculata* Hook. var. *occulta* when *C. oculata* Hook. var. *oculata*, the autonym created by the publication of *C. oculata* var. *subhirsuta* H. Huber (in Mem. Soc. Brot. 12: 65. 1957), was intended. Perhaps arising from this, the Catalogue of Life (<http://www.catalogueoflife.org/annual-checklist/2013/search/all/key/Ceropegia/page/12/sort/group/direction/asc>) deriving its data from ITIS (http://www.itis.gov/servlet/SingleRpt/RefRpt?search_type=publication&search_id=pub_id&search_id_value=8765) lists *Ceropegia occulta* and *C. occulta* var. *occulta*, yet no autonym is known to have been established in *C. occulta*, only in *C. oculata*.

Conclusion

Although we recognize the difference in pronunciation and derivation of the two names, given the errors that have occurred, we are requesting a binding decision under Art 53.5 as to whether *Ceropegia oculata* Hook. and *C. occulta* R.A. Dyer are sufficiently alike to be confused and thus they should be treated as homonyms. Were they to be treated as homonyms, as *C. oculata* Hook. has priority over *C. occulta* R.A. Dyer, the latter name would be an illegitimate later homonym and needs to be replaced by a new name.

Acknowledgments

The authors are grateful to Dr. K.N. Gandhi and Dr. J. McNeill for their valuable comments and critically going through the note. We are also thankful to Director, Botanical Survey of India for facilities.