

## LILIACEAE

NOTES ON *KNIPHOFIA****Kniphofia bruceae* (Codd) Codd, stat. nov.**

*K. praecox* Bak. subsp. *bruceae* Codd in *Bothalia* 9: 449 (1968).  
Type: Cape, near Komga, *Bruce* 604 (PRE, holo.).

The plant described as *K. praecox* Bak. in Saunderson's *Refugium Botanicum*, t.169 (1870) came from the garden of Mr Saunders and is recorded as having been collected by Thomas Cooper at the Cape. An examination of the type specimen in K, however, led to the conclusion that the plant was of hybrid derivation. As mentioned in *Bothalia* 9: 445 (1968), it resembles specimens of unknown origin cultivated in Europe since the early part of the nineteenth century and which are preserved in several European herbaria (e.g. BM, G, L) under names such as 'Alettris uvaria', 'Tritomanthe uvaria' etc. They differ from *Kniphofia uvaria* (and related robust species such as *K. linearifolia*) in having longer and more acuminate bracts and cannot be exactly matched by specimens collected in the wild state. Similar hybrids are now in cultivation throughout the world and two forms, a summer-flowering and a winter-flowering red-hot poker, are widely grown in South Africa and are occasionally found as garden escapes.

It was further concluded that the narrow bracts were contributed by a little-known robust *Kniphofia* which has been recorded from three small disjunct areas: (a) near Komga, (b) between Plettenberg Bay and Knysna and (c) near Kouga in the Willowmore District. Because of its affinity with and possible parentage of *K. praecox*, this *Kniphofia* was described as *K. praecox* subsp. *bruceae* in 1968. However, it may be separated from *K. praecox* on the basis of several characters, for example the narrower, even more acuminate bracts, longer pedicels, the somewhat shorter perianth which tends to be constricted above the ovary, and the well exerted stamens. It is, therefore, considered that a more satisfactory treatment would be to accord separate species rank to the wild plant.

In view of its rarity and limited distribution, it may be questioned if *K. bruceae* could have been introduced to Europe before or near the beginning of the nineteenth century. Fortunately, such an introduction can be confirmed by the illustration in Jacquin's *Fragmenta* t.4 (probably 1800), reproduced in *Bothalia* 9: 381 (1968). Although entitled 'Veltheimia uvaria', it is not that species, but is an excellent match of the type of *K. bruceae* from near Komga. Note, for instance, the shape of the raceme, the drawing of a separate flower showing the constriction above the ovary and the well exerted stamens, the acuminate bracts at the base of the raceme, and the portion of an old raceme with numerous persistent pedicels, all of which are characteristic of *K. bruceae* (illustrated in *Bothalia* 9: 450, 451, 1968). Although Jacquin does not record the origin of his plant, there can be little doubt that it must have been collected by Georg Scholl, collector for the Schönbrunn Gardens, who spent from 1786 to 1799 in South Africa, accompanied during 1786 to Feb. 1787 by Franz Boos. Details of his itineraries are not known but it may be accepted that his travels took him eastwards as far as Kaffraria.

In *Bothalia* 9: 448 (1968), the few known specimens from the Knysna – Willowmore areas were included in *K. praecox* subsp. *praecox*. They are now considered to belong rather in *K. bruceae* and, although they differ somewhat from the Komga specimens, they also differ among themselves, and more material from these areas is desirable. Since the 1968 revision, only one additional specimen, *Comins* 1552 from Kei Road, a good match of the type of *K. bruceae*, has been seen.

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