

POLYGONACEAE

REINSTATEMENT OF *OXYGONUM ACETOSELLA* WELW.

R.A. Graham in his revision of *Oxygonum* in *Kew Bulletin* 1957: 165 (1957), places *Oxygonum acetosella* Welw. as a synonym of *Oxygonum alatum* Burch. because they are similar in their winged fruits and lobed leaves. On closer investigation it is found that *O. acetosella* differs from *O. alatum* by the total absence of cup-shaped and elongated scales scattered over the entire surface of the plant, the shallowly lobed leaves and the entire ocreae, which are always fringed in the latter. Figure 5 represents a scatter diagram, using internode length along one axis and width of leaves along the other axis, which clearly separates the two taxa.

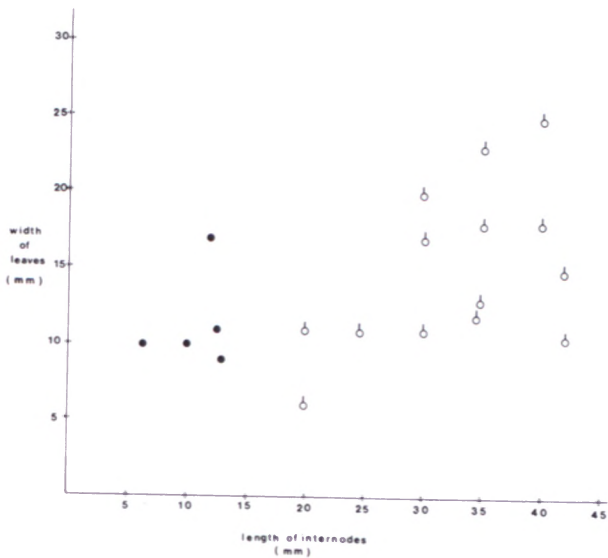


FIGURE 5.— Scatter diagram illustrating the difference between *Oxygonum acetosella*, ●, and *O. alatum*, ○.

*O. acetosella* Welw. in Transactions of the Linnean Society of London 27: 60 (1869); Hiern: 903 (1900); Bak. & C.H. Wr.: 99 (1909); Gossweiler: 395 (1953). Type: Angola, Mossamedes, Welwitsch 1757 (BM iso.; K; PRE!). Figure 6.

A glabrous, somewhat fleshy, glaucous, decumbent or prostrate annual herb, much branched from the base.



*Oxygonum acetosella* Welw.

Det. *G. J. Francis* 1987



Quoted as *Oxygonum acetosella* Welw. in *Trans. Linn. Soc. Lond.* 27: 60 (1869).  
by *P. G. J. van der Meulen* LTD 1510  
Quoted as *Oxygonum acetosella* Welw. in *Trans. Linn. Soc. Lond.* 27: 60 (1869).  
by *P. G. J. van der Meulen* LTD 1510



Escola Politecnica  
Museu Nacional - Secção de Botânica  
Wilw. Her. Angolense  
1757

MUSEU BOTÂNICO  
DA  
FACULDADE DE CIÊNCIAS  
LISBOA

*Oxygonum acetosella* Welw.  
Estação Angola: Mossamedes  
Habitat  
Alt. ... Det. VI-VII-1859  
Col. F. Welwitsch N.º 1757  
Det. Obs.

FIGURE 6.— Type of *Oxygonum acetosella* Welw.

*Stems* semicylindrical, glabrous, up to 200 mm long. *Ocrea* truncate, up to 8 mm long, quite entire or minutely erose-denticulate, with a green leaf-like limb up to 3 mm long. *Leaves* broadly lanceolate to ovate, simple or shallowly 2-3-lobed, (30-)39-56(-60) × (9-)12-22 (-27) mm, acute at the apex, narrowed into the winged petiole, fleshy, glabrous. *Inflorescence* a small thyse with fascicles of up to 3 flowers in the axils of ovate membranous bracts. *Flowers* bisexual. *Perianth* segments 5, obovate, 5-6 mm long, white. *Stamens* 8; anthers pale blue, up to 1 mm long; filaments 2,5-4,0 mm long with a ring of cilia one-eighth from base. *Styles* 3, joined for almost half their length, up to 5 mm long. *Fruit* oblong, up to 10 mm long, with 3 narrow wings.

Found on grassy flats and sandy hills in northern South West Africa/Namibia. Figure 7.

Vouchers: *Giess 7954* (PRE, WIND); *Moss & Jacobsen K299* (PRE).

#### REFERENCES

- BAKER, J.G. & WRIGHT, C.H. 1909. Polygonaceae. In W.T. Thiselton-Dyer, *Flora of tropical Africa* 6,1: 99. Reeve, Kent.
- GOSSWEILER, J. 1953. *Nomes indigenas de plantas de Angola*: 395. Luanda.
- GRAHAM, R.A. 1957. A revision of *Oxygonum*. *Kew Bulletin* 1: 165.

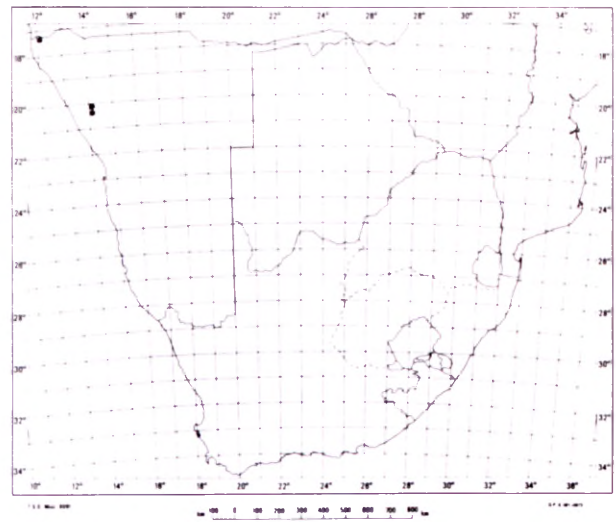


FIGURE 7.—Distribution of *Oxygonum acetosella* Welw. in South West Africa/Namibia.

- HIERN, W.P. 1900. Polygonaceae. *Catalogue of the African plants collected by Dr Friedrich Welwitsch in 1853-1861*: 903. London.
- WELWITSCH, F. 1869. Polygonaceae. *Transactions of the Linnean Society of London* 27: 60. London.

G. GERMISHUIZEN

MS. received: Feb. 1988.