

A NEW SPECIES OF *ORNITHOGALUM* FROM THE NATAL DRAKENSBERG***Ornithogalum aloiforme* Oberm. sp. nov. distincta.**

Planta minora c. 17 cm alta. *Bulbus* depresso-globosus c. 25 mm diam. *Folia* c. 6 spiram laxam deposita a basi tubiforma pseudo-caulem formant; lamina linearia acuminata ad 20 cm longa et 3 cm lata crista excentrica longitudinali glauca mollis tenuis. *Racemus* axillaris simplex erectus ad 12 cm longus floribus compactibus. *Perianthii segmenta* albida viridi costata linearia 10 mm longa. *Stamina* erecta 8 mm longa; filamenta subulata viridia. *Ovarium* obovoideum a basi contractum; stylus filiformis trisulcatus; stigma trilobatum; ovula multiseriata.

TYPE: Natal, 2929 (Underberg): Giants Castle, Thabanyama, moist open veld, amongst rocks, January 1969, c. 3 000 m., *Vahrmeijer 1877* (PRE, holo.). The type flowered at the Botanical Research Institute, Pretoria during March and April 1975.

Small plant c. 17 cm tall. *Bulb* depressed-globose, c. 25 mm in diam., fleshy, turning green when exposed to light. *Leaves* about 6, persistent, spirally arranged, close together, the erect basal part tubular, forming a short pseudo-stem below; lamina spreading, somewhat laxly recurved, linear-acuminate, up to 20 cm long and 3 cm broad, with a raised longitudinal ridge to one side, margin smooth, apex acute, dull glaucous green, soft and thin. *Racemes* axillary, simple, c. 12 cm high with the flowers close together and overlapping; peduncle curved, somewhat flattened; lowest bract largest, subulate. *Flower* opening in the morning, closing at night; the perianth-segments somewhat spreading, linear, about 10 mm long, 4 mm broad, white with a green dorsal keel. *Stamens* about 8 mm long, erect; filaments subulate, green; anthers small, 1 mm, versatile, introrse. *Ovary* obovoid, narrowed towards the base, trisulcate, green; style white, slender, trisulcate, about as long as ovary; stigma apical, 3-lobed, minutely papillate; ovules multiseriate. FIGS. 10 and 11.

This species is of great interest because of its habit. Whereas most bulbous Liliaceae (and all the species of *Ornithogalum* that I am aware of) produce annual leaves and a terminal (or pseudo-terminal) inflorescence, this species has the evergreen spirally arranged leaves forming a pseudo-stem. In their axils appear, laterally, simple axillary racemes, thus resembling species of *Aloe*. In this instance, however, the racemes are situated in the axils of the leaves and are therefore lateral, whereas in *Aloe* they are considered terminal, being placed on the opposite side of the stem.

In the Liliaceae the ovules are usually biserially arranged in the three locules but the above species and a few others, for instance *O. miniatum* Jacq., *O. thyrsoides* Jacq. etc., have the ovules in a multiseriate arrangement, probably caused by a doubling of the placental ridges.

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FIG. 10.—*Ornithogalum aloiforme*. 1, habit, $\times 1$; 2, perianth-segment, $\times 4$; 3, stamen, $\times 3$; 4, gynoecium, $\times 10$; 5, cross-section of ovary showing multiseriate ovules, $\times 6$.



FIG. 11.—Raceme of *Ornithogalum aloiforme*, $\times 1$.