

## MELASTOMATACEAE

### A NEW MEMECYLON RECORD FROM TONGALAND

Among the many interesting plants collected by Dr E. J. Moll in Tongaland in recent years was the specimen, *Moll & Nel* 5592, from a small tree up to 4 m high growing in sand forest 7 km W. of Muzi. The specimen was clearly referable to the genus *Memecylon* but did not match material of either *M. natalense* Markgr. or of *M. grandiflorum* A. & R. Fernandes, the only two species of the genus previously recorded from Natal. Comparison of *Moll & Nel* 5592 with material in the Kew Herbarium suggested that the specimen was closest to the recently described *M. sousae* A. & R. Fernandes, in Bol. Soc. Brot., Sér. 2, 46: 67, t. IV (1972), from Mozambique. The specimen differed from *Gomes e Sousa* 4380, the isotype of *M. sousae* in the Kew Herbarium, however, in having consistently smaller leaves. The largest leaves on *Moll & Nel* 5592 were  $3,5 \times 1,7$  cm and these were significantly smaller than those in typical *M. sousae*. A small flowering twig detached from *Moll & Nel* 5592 was sent to Prof. A. Fernandes for comment. He kindly confirmed that the specimen was close to *M. sousae* but added that if the leaves were consistently small there was a possibility that the specimen may represent an undescribed species.

In an attempt to clarify the situation Dr Moll was requested to collect more material and, in particular, to try and establish the range of variation in leaf size within a population and even on a single plant. Unfortunately Dr Moll was unable to locate the plant on his next visit to Tongaland but the following year (1972) another population was found 6 km W. of Muzi and the collections *Moll & Muller* 5690a, 5690b were made. The leaves on *Moll & Muller* 5690a (NH) are mostly the same size as those on *Moll & Nel* 5592. However, on *Moll & Muller* 5690b (NH), which was collected from the same plant as 5690a, the leaves are significantly larger and range in size from  $3,5-5,6 \times 2,1-3,8$  cm. These larger leaves on *Moll & Muller* 5690b match those of typical *M. sousae* and this specimen was therefore referred to *M. sousae*. As *Moll & Muller* 5690a was collected off the same plant, it too, together with *Moll & Nel* 5592, were also referred to *M. sousae*. The range of variation in leaf size within *M. sousae* is therefore greater than initially realized and indicated by material from Mozambique.