

## Notes on African plants

### VARIOUS AUTHORS

### ARALIACEAE

#### A NEW SPECIES OF *CUSSONIA* FROM THE SOUTHERN CAPE

***Cussonia gamtoosensis* Strey, sp. nov., *C. spicata* Thunb. affinis, sed arboribus parvioribus multicaulis, foliis bidigitatis, pinnulis lanceolatis integris cuspidatis, spicis minoribus differt.**

Arbores parvae multicaules ad 4 m altae, radicibus tuberosis. *Folia* in semi-fasciculis terminalibus disposita: foliola digitata, pinnulis (3) 5-7, simplicis vel articulatis. *Pseudo-inflorescentia* biennis, in anno primo ex fasciculo ramis sparse foliosis constans, ad apicem fasciculo bractearum imbricarum 10-15 mm longarum terminans. *Rami primarii* 4-8, anno secundo folia exuti, spicas 4-8 penduculatas producentes. *Spicae* partibus floriferis 2-3 cm longis, 2-2,5 cm latis. *Flores* dense spiraliter dispositi, sessiles, virides. *Bracteae* 4 mm longae, 3 mm latae, ciliatae, chartaceae, bracteolis simulares. *Calyx* ovario inferiore adnatus, oram dentatam 0,5 mm altam formans. *Petala* 5, valvata, deltoidea. *Fructus* cuneiformes, sessiles; exocarpium carnosum. *Semina* 1 vel 2, albumine ruminato.

**TYPE:** Cape, 3325 (Port Elizabeth): Gamtoos Ferry (-CC), 17.5/1972, *Strey & Nicholson 10957* (PRE, holo.: NH; K; PMB).

Evergreen small trees, with up to 24 stems, up to 4 m high, trunks 3-10 cm thick, rarely branched; wood coarse, long-fibrous, pithed; bark smooth, light grey; roots tuberous. *Leaves* bidigitately compound, suborbicular in outline, without scales at articulations, up to 30 cm in diameter; petiole terete, 10-30 cm long, 2-5 mm in diameter, ribbed, glabrous; stipules intrapetiolar, adnate to base of petiole and fused at base, about 1,5 cm long; leaflets (3) 5 to 7, digitately compound with 2 to 5 pinnules, simple or occasionally with a vertebrate articulation (see Strey, R.G. in *Bothalia* 11: 191-201; 1973), spreading at an angle to the petiole, thick leathery, mottled dull greyish olive-green, petiolule 2-6 cm long, not, or only slightly winged, pinnules 4-10 cm long, 1,5-2,5 cm broad, entire or sometimes with 1-2-dentate margin, lanceolate, cuspidate, nerves connecting near the revolute margin. *Pseudo-inflorescence* biennial, during first year consisting of 4-8 sparsely leafy

inflorescence branches, 14-30 cm long, 8-12 mm in diameter, longitudinally ribbed, with apical cluster of triangular bracts about 12 mm long and 20 mm broad; during second year primary inflorescence branches drop leaves and bracts and develop a pseudo-umbel of 4-8 spikes with peduncles 2-3 cm long, about 1 cm in diameter, terete, with 2-4 turgid triangular bracts at base about 1 cm long, spikes 2-3 cm long, 2-2,5 cm in diameter. *Flowers* spirally arranged, sessile, bracts 3 mm broad when fresh, 4 mm long with hyaline tip, carinate, ciliate, nearly as long as ovary; bracteoles equivalent but slightly smaller. *Calyx* rim 1 mm, 5-pointed, accrescent in fruit. *Petals* 5, valvate, 5 mm long, 3 mm broad at base. *Stamens* 5, alternating with petals; filaments 5 mm long; anthers 2 mm long, oblong, introrse, versatile, spreading, caducous. *Ovary* inferior, bilocular; styles about 0,25 mm long, persistent, connivent on minute stylopod; disc flat with radiating ridges. *Fruit* 8 mm long, conical, mauve and fleshy when fertile. *Seed* one per locule, 6 mm long, planoconvex, rugose; areole orbicular under short obtuse crest; endosperm ruminato.

**CAPE.**—3325 (Port Elizabeth): Gamtoos Ferry (-CC), *Strey 10359* (NH, PRE, K), *Strey & Nicholson 10 57* (PRE holo.: NH, K, PNB); *Von Breitenbach s.n.* (Saasveld Herb.)

Due to its habit and leaf colour this species blends well with its surroundings and is hard to spot in the *Euphorbia* brush on the mountain slopes on which it occurs. So far it has only been recorded from the type locality.

Its habit is the same as that of *C. zuluensis* Strey, but overall it is nearest to the type of *C. spicata* Thunb. For the following reasons it is regarded as specifically distinct from *C. spicata*. It is a small, many-stemmed tree, the leaves are bidigitate, more reduced, have a different colour and surface (see Reyneke, W.F. in *Proc. Electron Microscopy Soc. Sthm. Afr.* 3: 33-34; 1973, who refers to the species here described as *Cussonia* sp. nov.), while bracts, bracteoles and flower characters also show differences.