

UMBELLIFERAE

A NOTE ON THE IDENTITY OF *CONIUM CHAEROPHYLLOIDES*

The description of *Seseli chaerophylloides* Thunb., Prodr. Pl. Cap. 1: 51 (1794), the basionym of *Conium chaerophylloides* (Thunb.) Eckl. & Zeyh., Enum. 355 (1836), was based on *Thunberg* 7191 and 7192 from the Cape Province. Through the courtesy of the Director, Institute of Systematic Botany of the University, Uppsala, the two syntypes of *C. chaerophylloides* were received on loan (see Figs. 2 and 3).



FIG. 2.—Photograph of *Thunberg* 7191, syntype of *Conium chaerophylloides* (Thunb.) Eckl. & Zeyh., housed in the Institute of Systematic Botany of the University, Uppsala.

The two syntypes were compared with the material of *C. maculatum* L. housed in the Kew Herbarium in an attempt to establish which characters differentiate these allegedly distinct species. The comparison revealed that the syntypes of *C. chaerophylloides* and the material of *C. maculatum* agree in all essential characters examined, although two small apparent differences were noted:

1. The stems in the syntypes of *C. chaerophylloides* (and in all of the South African material seen) lack the purplish spots, i.e. they are not maculate, which are a fairly characteristic feature of much of the material of *C. maculatum*. However, *C. maculatum* is a variable species and does not always have maculate stems: there is a variant in Europe with non-maculate stems.



FIG. 3.—Photograph of *Thunberg* 7192, syntype of *Conium chaerophylloides* (Thunb.) Eckl. & Zeyh., housed in the Institute of Systematic Botany of the University, Uppsala.

2. The petals in *C. chaerophylloides* are slightly narrower and smaller although there is no discontinuity in petal size between *C. chaerophylloides* and *C. maculatum*. Petal size in *C. maculatum* appears to be fairly variable and petals the size of those on the syntypes of *C. chaerophylloides* do occur in European material.

These slight differences do not appear to be of sufficient taxonomic significance to enable *C. chaerophylloides* and *C. maculatum* to be maintained as distinct species. I am persuaded, therefore, to follow the decision taken by Hiern in *Fl. Trop. Afr.* 3: 9 (1877) to treat *C. chaerophylloides* as a synonym of *C. maculatum*. The occurrence in South Africa of plants with unspotted stems could perhaps be accounted for by the introduction from Europe of the variant with non-maculate stems.

Conium maculatum L., Sp. Pl. ed. 1: 243 (1753); Hiern in *Fl. Trop. Afr.* 3: 9 (1877).

Seseli chaerophylloides Thunb., Prodr. Pl. Cap. 1: 51 (1794); Willd., Sp. Pl. ed. 4, 1: 1461 (1798); Thunb., Fl. Cap. ed. Schult. 259 (1823); DC., Prodr. 4: 148 (1830). Syntypes: Cape Province, *Thunberg* 7191 (UPS!), *Thunberg* 7192 (UPS!).

Conium chaerophylloides (Thunb.) Eckl. & Zeyh., Enum.: 355 (1836). Syntypes as above.