THE GENUS BERSAMA.

By E. P. Phillips, M.A., D.Sc., F.L.S., Botanist in Charge of the National Herbarium.

The genus Bersama was monographed by Mr. E. G. Baker in 1907 (Journ. Bot., XLV, p. 12), and two species, viz., B. lucens, Szyszl., and B. tysoniana, Oliv., were described from South Africa. From information received from the Union Forest Department, it was suspected that other species occurred in the South African forests, and, at the suggestion of the Chief of the Division of Botany, I undertook the examination of all the material in the local herbaria. This has led me to separate two plants as distinct species

from specimens hitherto always called B. tysoniana.

The interest in the various species was first aroused by Mr. C. C. Robertson, M F., the Senior Research Forest Officer, who sent samples of the bark of B. tysoniana to the Imperial Institute for examination, as it was reported that the natives used the bark medicinally. The information supplied by Mr. Robertson to the Imperial Institute did not tally in some respects with the actual samples forwarded, and he took a good deal of trouble to clear up the matter. We are now in a position to state that the information Mr. Robertson received applied to a distinct species which I have named B. Swinnyi, while the bark supplied was that of B. tysoniana. Dr. T. R. Sim,* in his description of B. tysoniana, falls into the same error, as the tree referred to by Mr. Henkel as having "a very bitter bark, like quinine in taste," is not this species, but quite a distinct plant, which I have named B. Stayneri, so his remarks on B. tysoniana do not refer to this species alone. Sim suspected the Port St. Johns' plants to be an allied but distinct species, and I have been able to confirm this. It is the plant now named B. Swinnyi.

Mr. J. J. Kotze, B.Sc., of the Forest Department, who has given me every assistance in this work, allowed me to go through the files relating to the genus, and, having the actual specimens in the Forestry Herbarium, I was able to clear up some doubtful points. All the correspondence referred to plants which went under the name of B. tysoniana and the information was confusing until I was able to definitely recognize that three distinct species were involved. The information derived from the above source I have tabulated

under the specific names.

B. tysoniana.

The Conservator of Forests, Transkeian Conservancy, states: "Trees are scattered singly, fairly plentifully over most of the mountain forests and where accessible. It is a prolific seeder, and I am of opinion that it could be easily propagated artificially under mountain forest conditions in its habitat. In collecting the bark, natives do not cut down the whole tree, but merely take their requirements from time to time from living trees. I can confirm the statement: it is a well-known fact that local natives use the bark medicinally." (Stated that native doctors use the bark as a specific against fevers.—(E. P. P.)

A sample of bark was collected by Forester Van de Vijver from the Ngadu Patrol, and he writes: "This bark is used as medicine by some natives, but not all. In cases of calves being thin, they dose the animal with it powdered and mixed with other roots, also lambs." Forester Dawson submitted a sample of bark from the Amanzamnyama Patrol, with the note: "Bark has a slightly bitter taste. I have only seen one tree in my patrol and very few natives know it here. They do not seem to use it themselves, but on their cattle for gall-sickness after boiling bark and dosing from one to two bottles." Forester Fegen collected samples of bark from the Notinsela Patrol, and reported: "Bark has a slightly bitter taste. Natives state that the bark is used as a medicine for hysteria, which is common amongst the native girls. Other natives state that it is used indiscriminately for both cattle and human beings. Judging by the number of trees barked, it must be used more extensively for medicine than natives will admit."

Forester Kriel, who collected the species in the Wilo Forest, Mqanduli District, reports

it to be a tree about 25 ft. high with a girth of 42 in.

The tree is locally known as "Bitter Bark" and "Bastard Sneezewood" and by the natives as "Endiaza" or "Andianda."

B. Swinnyi.

Forester Swinny reports this species to be a tree up to 90 ft. high, with a stem diameter of 2-3 ft., and not common at Port St. Johns. He further states that there appears to be two forms of the species which the natives distinguish, though they have only one name, "Sendiandia." The smaller form, when full grown, has a trunk I-1½ ft. in diameter.

Mr. Robertson first detected the difference in the barks of this species and B. tysoniana, and noted that the bark had "a strong bitter taste producing a sort of burning sensation in the mouth lasting for several hours, during which I could taste nothing else distinctly." He forwarded a sample of the bark to the Imperial Institute in March, 1915. Mr. Ross, then Conservator in the Eastern Conservancy, writes: "I distinctly remember this tree being pointed out to me many years ago when stationed at Kokstad as being of value medicinally, an infusion of the bark being extensively used by the natives for certain ailments. It is found somewhat sparingly throughout the mid-Pondoland forests and close to the Natal border in the Mount Ayliff District. It is a very conspicuous object in the forests, of large girth, with deeply furrowed bark, and with foliage not unlike sneezewood. It is usually unsound near the base and shows signs of much damage by removal of bark. This tree is by some foresters confused with 'Coffee Pear' (Pleurostylia capensis), but a keen observer will easily distinguish a great difference."

Forester Pretorius collected samples of bark from the Cwebe Patrol and supplied the following information:—"Bark has a slightly bitter taste (Mr. Robertson remarks 'but burning taste'). The bark of this tree in these parts is very thin and can only be removed in small bits. The natives use it for different medicines, but they refuse to say what it is really used for." Specimens of bark from the Port St. Johns Patrol were received with similar information to the above; in each case Mr. Robertson noted the

burning taste, more so in some specimens than in others.

B. Stayneri.

This species was sent to Mr. Robertson by Forester C. W. Chilvers in June, 1915. Mr. Robertson noted the differences between these specimens and B. tysoniana as follows:—

1. Bark has not got the "strong bitter taste" which I referred to in the case of one of the specimens from the Transkei (i.e. B. Swynni E.P.P.).

2. Under sides of the leaves and the petioles are very hairy, whereas they are glabrous on specimens received from the Transkei.

3. The specimens were in flower when collected in May. Sim states that this species † flowers in August to September.

^{*} It is just possible that some of Mr. Ross's remarks may apply to B. tysoniana.

[†] Mr. Robertson, although he noted these differences, still considered the plant B. tysoniana.

Mr. C. F. Stayner, in a minute to the Conservator of Forests, Pietermaritzburg, states: "One large tree isolated by heavy fellings was in flower as late as September, and I have come to the conclusion that this species (but he confused his specimen with B. tysoniana E.P.P.) is inconsistent in its period of blossoming. I find that Bersama is well known to native herbalists and is frequently employed, but for what disease it is a specific I cannot ascertain." Mr. Stayner submitted his specimen to the Bolus Herbarium, and these were reported on as follows:—"Very nearly allied to B. tysoniana, Oliv., and probably that species, but the type of B. tysoniana has more slender, longer, and less tomentose petioles."

Mr. J. S. Henkel, who also collected the species at Mkazeni Forest Reserve, Riverside, Natal, in March, 1917, states "that the tree is about 30 ft. high—a bole about 70 in. in girth and 12 ft. long, somewhat crooked. Natives use the bark as medicine and the tree has been injured by the removal of bark. Bark has a bitter quinine-like taste." Mr. Henkel also noted that the leaves were hairy, and not glabrous. Forester Honshold informs Mr. Henkel that in the reserve there are about three to four other trees, all smaller than the one he saw. In the bush many seedlings were noticed up to about 4 ft. high. The young shoots are frequently reddish in colour and leaves serrated and mucronulate, but

older leaves have margins entire.

Mr. Robertson took considerable pains to sift all the evidence he had accumulated, and tabulated his results * as follows:—

Mr. Robertson distinguished the various samples of bark he examined as (1) those with a bitter taste and (2) those with a bitter and burning taste. This latter property he referred to as "X."

Forest.	Large or Small Variety.	Sample of Bark.	Taste.	Remarks.
Mountain Forests.	. 1001 - 1010 103			
Kambi	Presumably the	Sent June, 1914, and	Not X	B.tysoniana, sent to
37 1	large variety	February, 1915	27 . 27	Imperial Institute.
Nqadu	Large	Collected March, 1915	Not X	B. tysoniana.†
Amanzamnyama.	Large	Collected March, 1915	Not X	B. tysoniana.
COAST FORESTS.				
Port St. Johns.	Large	Sent July, 1914	Has X	B. Swinnyi.
Bulolo Forest	Large	Collected March, 1915	Has X, though not strongly	B. Swinnyi.
Mboleni Forest	Large	Collected March, 1915	Not X	B. tysoniana.
Cwebe Forest	Large	Collected March, 1915	Has X, though	B. Swinnyi.
Owene Poleso	Large	Conected Maten, 1915	not strongly	B. Same
Cwebe Forest	Small	Collected March, 1915	Has X, though	B. Swinnyi.
CWCDC I OICSU	Omon	Conceded March, 1919	not strongly	D. Dievingt.
Port St. Johns.	Small	Sent July, 1914	Has X	B. Swinnyi.
Bulolo Forest	Small	Collected March, 1915	Has X	B. Swinnyi.
Duitho Folest	13111811	Conected March, 1915	nas A	D. Daringe.

Mr. Robertson came to the following conclusions:-

1. In mountain forests the large variety (i.e. B. tysoniana E.P.P.) has not "X." Yet the natives do use the bark in these forests, so that its medicinal qualities do not depend on its having "X." It appears that only the large variety is found in the mountain forests.

^{*} In the "Remarks" column I have inserted the name of the species which was given in the original by a herbarium number only.

[†] I have not seen specimens of these, but do not doubt the correctness of the names given.—(E. P. P.)

2. In the coast forests the large variety * usually has "X" to a greater or less extent, but apparently not so strongly as the small variety (B. Swinnyi E.P.P.). The latter always has it and usually very strong.

The results of my investigation may be summarized as follows:-

- 1. Foresters had hitherto only recognized two species, viz., B. lucens and B. tysoniana.
- 2. Under the name of B. tysoniana, three species have been included—
 - (a) B. tysoniana, found in both the mountain and coast forests.

(b) B. Swinnyi, found only in the coast forests.

(c) B. Stayneri, only recorded from Natal.

- 3. The bark of B. tysoniana, B. Swinnyi, and B. Stayneri is used medicinally by the natives.
- 4. The bark of B. Swinnyi has a bitter burning taste and differs in this respect from that of B. tysoniana and B. Stayneri, in which the bark, while bitter, has not the burning taste.

5. There appear to be two forms of B. Swinnyi in the forest of Port St. Johns, known to the foresters as the large and small varieties. The natives are said

also to distinguish these, but have the same name for both.

I have been unable to furnish any additional information with regard to the other species recorded.

In conclusion I should like to refer again to Mr. C. C. Robertson's share of this work. Since 1914 he has been slowly accumulating evidence from foresters about the species, and my remarks are only a digest of the information he collected.

With the assistance of the Forest Department, the Division of Botany is undertaking an examination of the barks of the various species as regards their medicinal value.

KEY TO SPECIES.

Mid-rib on lower surface of leaflets covered with long straight hairs. Stayneri.

Mid-rib on lower surface of leaflets glabrous.

Fruits without woody protuberances; inflorescence silky or tomentose with fine adpressed hairs.

Leaves usually 2-3-jugate; leaflets obovate, usually rounded at the apex, obtuse...... lucens.

Leaves usually 4-jugate; leaflet oblong-lanceolate,

spreading hairs appearing almost shaggy..... tysoniana.

1. B. Swinnyi, Phillips.

Arbor. Rami glabri vel juniores serici. Folia 10-20 cm. longa, pinnata, 5-jugata; foliola 2-8 cm. longa, 0 9-3 · 5 cm. lata, oblongo-lanceolata, ovato-oblonga vel ovata, apice obtusa, glabra. Racemus sessilis, 2 · 5-5 cm. longus, circa 3 cm. latus, subglobous vel ovatus. Bracteae numerosae, 2 cm. longae, ovatae, acuminatae, sericae.

A large or small tree, with rough bark. Branches glabrous or in very young branches velvety. Leaves 10-20 cm. long, grouped at the ends of the branches, petiolate, pinnately compound, 5-jugate; petiole $2 \cdot 5-3 \cdot 5$ cm. long, pubescent in young leaves, glabrous in older leaves; leaflets petiolate, 2-8 cm. long, $0 \cdot 9-3 \cdot 5$ cm. broad, oblong-lanceolate or ovate-oblong, or ovate, obtuse or slightly retuse at the apex, rounded at the base, with

^{*} Mr. Robertson here confuses B. tysoniana and B. Swinnyi, both of which occur in the coast forests.—(E. P. P.)

the mid-rib prominent beneath and the lateral veins distinct, glabrous. Inflorescence sessile, 2·5-5 cm. long, about 3 cm. in diameter, subglobose or ovoid in shape, surrounded at the base with numerous ovate acuminate densely silky bracts about 2 cm. long. Floral-bract 7 mm. long, ovate, acuminate, very densely silky. Pedicel about 4 cm. long, terete, silky. Sepals 6 mm. long, ovate, acute, distinctly keeled, silky. Petals 1·3 cm. long, about 3 mm. broad at the middle, spathulate-linear, tomentose without, sometimes with two marginal processes at the middle. Stamens monadelphous; filaments terete and narrowing above, flattened below and hairy on the flattened portion. Ovary 1·5 mm. long, sub-globose, villous; style 1·3 cm. long, terete and densely villous in the lower \(\frac{3}{4}\) becoming more or less four-angled and glabrous above; stigma globose. Fruit not seen.

Pondoland: In monte propoxe ostium flum St. Johns R., c. 1000 ft., February, Bolus 8724; 20 ft., January, Flanagan 2884; Port St. Johns, Swinny in Herb. Forest Dept., 1038, 1037; Pongwani Forest, Port St. Johns, January, Coetzee in Herb. Forest Dept.,

1866.

2. B. Stayneri Phillips.

Rami glabri. Folia pinnata, 7-16 cm. longa, 4-5-jugata; petiolus pilosus; folioal 1·7-5·2 cm. longa, 0·8-1·5 cm. lata, oblongo-lanceolata vel elliptica, apice acuta mucronataque, basi paullo cuneata, subtus pilosa vel pubescentia. Racemus 3·5-6·5 cm. longus.

Fructus 2.7-3 cm. longus, ligneus.

Bark thick and rough. Branches glabrous, rough with longitudinal furrows. Leaves pinnate, petioled, 7-16 cm. long, 4-5-jugate; petiole 1-2 cm. long, very densely pilose; rachis densely pilose; leaflets 1·7-5·2 cm. long, 0·8-1·5 cm. broad, oblong-lanceolate or elliptic, acute and mucronate at the apex rarely rounded, slightly cuneate at the base, the mid-rib deeply sunk on the under surface which is frequently somewhat rugose, prominent beneath and with the lateral veins distinct beneath, glabrous above, pilose or pubescent beneath, especially on the mid-rib. Inflorescence a shortly peduncled many-flowered raceme, 3·5-6·5 cm. long; peduncle 1-1·5 cm. long, very densely pilose. Bracts 3 mm. long, linear, tomentose, Pedicels 5 mm. long, terete, tomentose. Calyx 6 mm. long, densely tomentose, divided almost to the base. Petals 1·3 cm. long, 3 mm. broad, spathulate-linear, tomentose, reflexed in open flowers. Filaments 5 mm. long, semiterete, monadelphous and villous at the base. Ovary densely villous; style 3 mm. long, terete; stigma subglobose. Fruit 2·7-3 cm. long dehiscing by four valves; valves woody, covered with woody protuberances. Seeds reddish in colour, 1·1 cm. long, 6 mm. in diameter, ellipsoid, with a waxy yellow arillus at the base.

Natal, without locality, Stayner in Herb. Bolus; Stinkwood Forest, Ingeli, May, Chilvers in Herb. Forest Dept., 1518; Mkanzeni, Riversides, Henkel in Herb. Forest Dept.,

2421.

3. B. lucens Szysz.

A shrub 8-10 ft. high (ex Wood). Branches glabrous, with wrinkled greyish bark. Leaves petioled, compound, imparipinnate, 2-4-jugate, 10-20 cm. long; petiole 1·5-5·5 cm. long, glabrous, rarely pubescent; leaflets 1·8-9 cm. long, 1·3-4·6 cm. broad, obovate or obovate-elliptic, rarely elliptic, very rarely subacute, slightly narrowed at the base, glabrous, with the mid-rib distinct above, prominent beneath, and with thickened wavy margins. Inflorescence a lax axillary or terminal raceme, 6-14·5 cm. long, many-flowered; peduncle pubescent. Pedicels 0·4-1 cm. long, terete, densely tomentose with fine adpressed hairs; bracts 0·5 mm. long, ovate, pubescent. Calyx gamosepalous; lobes 3-4 mm. long, 2 mm. broad, ovate or ovate-elliptic, obtuse, finely but densely pubescent without and with fine adpressed hairs within, ciliated, the two posterior lobes connate and bifid at the apex. Petals dull yellow, 8·5 mm. long, 2·5 mm. broad above, oblong, obtuse, narrowed into an evident claw, pubescent. Disc unilateral. Filaments all connate at the base, 1 mm. long, terete, glabrous except at the base, the anterior filaments ciliated at the base and forming a tomentose shield 3 mm. long and 2·5 mm. broad; the posterior filaments

ciliated and pubescent at the base; anthers 2.5 mm. long, 1.5 mm. broad, oblong. Ovary 1 mm. long, 1.5 mm. broad, subglobose, densely villous, four-locular with a single ovule in each loculus; style 7 mm. long, cylindric, pubescent on the lower half; stigma globose, faintly lobed. Fruit 1.7 cm. long, 1.7 cm. in diameter, finely but densely pubescent, four-celled, each cell with a single seed, splitting into four valves when ripe. Seeds bright scarlet, 7 mm. long, 7 mm. in diameter, subglobose, wrinkled, flat on one side, convex on the other, with a fleshy yellow-green arillus. Wood, Natal Plants, 88; Sim, Forests and Forest Flora, 155; Journ. Bot., XLV, p. 13. Natalia lucens, Hochst., Harv. and Sond., Fl. Cap., 1, 369.

Komgha Div., Kei Mouth, 200 ft., August, Flanagan, 421; Transkei, Kentani, 20 ft., December, Miss Pegler, 726; Pondoland, mouth of St. Johns River, February, Bolus, 8836; Flanagan, 2568; 20 ft., January, Manino Forest, Engcobo Dist., August (leaf only). Zahn in Herb., Forest Dept., 2046; Natal, near Durban, 200 ft., February, Wood, 7392; March, Wood, 7518; Verulam, 100-200 ft., January, Wood, 10207; near Durban, Wood, 2570; 12666; Port Natal, Gueinzuis; Groenberg, February, Wood, 808; without precise locality, Saunders; near, Durban, 200-300 ft., March, Wood, 6307; Swaziland, kloof near Dalriach Mbabane, c. 4800 ft., December, Bolus; Transvaal, Barberton Dist., Unevoti Creek, Barberton, 3000 ft., February, Galpin, 849; Thorncroft in Herb. Transvaal Mus., 18292.

Flanagan, 421, mentioned by Baker as a form with smaller leaflets than the type is slightly confusing, inasmuch as Flanagan gave the same number to two different collectings. His No. 421 in the Bolus Herb. was collected at the Kei Mouth at an altitude of 200 ft. in August, 1894, and is the true B. lucens. His No. 421 in the Cape Government Herb. was also collected near the Kei Mouth at an altitude of 300 ft., but in January, 1890. The inflorescence in these specimens is compact, oblong in outline, and at the end of a long naked peduncle 9-12 cm. long. The peduncle is fasciated to a slight extent, which will account for the compact inflorescence. There is no difference in the floral structures of these specimens and other specimens of B. lucens which I have examined.

4. B. abyssinica Fresen.

A tree. Leaves petioled, 18–22 cm. long, pinnate; petiole 4–5 cm. long, terete, glabrous; rachis sometimes winged between the uppermost pair of leaflets; leaflets usually in four pairs, 2·5–4 cm. apart, 4–9 cm. long, 1·7–3·5 cm. broad, oblong-lanceolate or ovate-lanceolate, acuminate, acute, entire, or the margin sometimes serrated in the upper half, glabrous. Inflorescence racemose, 10–20 cm. long, on a woody peduncle 5–7 cm. long. Calyx campanulate, silky. Petals five, ligulate-spathulate, twice as long as the calyx, densely and finely silky, finally reflexed. Stamens five, in the male flower nearly as long as the petals; filaments monadelphous, silky. Capsule about 1 cm. long, 1 cm. in diameter, subglobose 3–4 valved, densely pubescent, without woody protuberances. Seeds 6 mm. long, black.

This description was drawn up partly from a fruiting specimen collected by Schimper

in Abyssinia and partly from the description in the "Flora Tropical Africa."

Baker, in his monograph on the genus (Journ. Bot., XLV, 12), makes no mention of this species occurring in Natal, though the record is made in the "Flora Tropical Africa," I, 434.

= B. integrifolia, Richard, Fl. Abyss., I, 107. This is a tropical African species.

5. B. tysoniana Oliv.

A tree 25 ft. high, with a girth of 42 in. (Krid). Branches glabrous. Leaves petioled, pinnately compound, 4-5-jugate, rarely 3-jugate, 5-20 cm. long; petiole 2-5 cm. long, subtomentose, pubescent to almost glabrous, sometimes white silky; leaflets 1.5-6 cm. long, 0.7-3 cm. broad, oblanceolate, oblong, oblong-elliptic, rarely obovate, rounded or shorty apiculate at the apex, cuneate more rarely rounded at the base, entire, rarely serrated in the upper half, with the mid-rib prominent beneath, glabrous. Inflorescence a

dense raceme, distinctly peduncled or subsessile, 6-17 cm. long, cylindric. Peduncle usually 1-3.5 cm. long, tomentose with spreading hairs. Pedicels 3 mm. long, tomentose with spreading hairs. Sepals 5-7 mm. long, 3 mm. broad, ovate, concave, acute or obtuse, tomentose with spreading hairs, two of the sepals united. Petals white $1 \cdot 1-1 \cdot 5$ cm. long, 2 mm. broad, oblong, linear-oblong or linear, narrowing sometimes into a linear claw below, subostuse or acute, villous. Filaments $0 \cdot 8-1 \cdot 2$ cm. long, terete and glabrous in the upper half, expanded villous and monadelphous in the lower half; anthers $1 \cdot 5$ mm. long, oblong in outline. Ovary densely villous; style 8 mm. long, densely villous below, glabrous or almost so above; stigma subglobose or globose. Fruit $2 \cdot 2$ cm. long, about $2 \cdot 2$ cm. in diameter, subglobose; the valves covered with woody protuberances. Seed $1 \cdot 2$ cm. long, about 6 mm. in diameter, more or less keeled on one face, convex on the other, reddish with a yellow arillus at the base.

Komgha Div., Komgha, on Alan Page's farm "Goldust," May (in leaf only), Galpin, 8470; Prospect, near Komgha, September, Flanagan, 309; Instsubani Forest, February (fruit), Leigh in Herb. Forest Dept., 1840; Wilo Forest, Mqanduli Dist., Kriel in Herb. Forest Dept., 1772; Mboleni Forest, Notineela, October, Fegen in Herb. Forest Dept., 1771; Manina Forest, Engcobo Dist., August, Zahn in Herb. Forest Dept., 2047 (leaf);

Cwebe Forest, January (fruit), Pretorius in Herb. Forest Dept., 1854.

Gerrard 1428 from Natal. Description of branches and leaves by Baker in Journ.

Bot., Jan., 1907, p. 15.

Arbor vel frutex? Ramulis cortice griseo tectis; foliis saepissime 4-jugis cum impari petiolulato, foliolis petiolulatis oblongis apice apiculatis lateralibus aliquantulum inaequilateraeibus oppositis vel passim alternis basi cuneatis vel interdum rotundatis coriaceis margine integris vel plus minus serratis costa superne impressa subtus subconspicua nerviis secundariis tenuibus inter se juxta marginem anastomosantibus foliolis terminalibus oblongo-oblanceolatis foliolis proximis quam distalibus minoribus; rachi omnino exalata.

I have seen a specimen in leaf only (Zahn in Herb. Forest Dept., 2037) which agrees with the above description, except that the leaves are 6-jugate. The leaflets which appear to be young have a long hairy apiculus, and are either entire or serrated in the upper half. In Tyson, 6216, in the Bolus Herb. on which Oliver founded his B. tysoniana, I find that some of the leaflets have this hairy apiculus and some are also toothed, so that it would appear that Baker is correct in regarding Gerrard, 1428, as near B. tysoniana, and I am of opinion that it is this species. The distribution of B. tysoniana suggests that it will probably be found in Natal.