

MYRTACEAE

SYZYGIUM PONDOENSE REDISCOVERED

In dealing with the African Myrtaceae in Bot. Jahrb. 54: 341 (1917), Engler and Von Brehmer included a new species of *Syzygium* from Pondoland. It was named *S. pondoense* Engl., and was based on the syntypes *Beyrich* 137, 159 and *Bachmann* 918. The locality cited was "Südostafrika: Pondoland; Randgebüsch an Flüssen zwischen Sandstein, 1-30 m ü. M.". The identity of *S. pondoense* has long been in doubt and, as far as is known, no specimens apart from the type material, have ever been referred to this species.

While collecting material of the genus *Eugenia* (Myrtaceae) in the Umtamvuna Nature Reserve in Natal during December 1975, the author came across a number of shrubs growing among sandstone boulders on islands in the bed of the Umtamvuna River. At first sight the dark green, rounded shrubs were mistaken for *Eugenia simii* Dümmer*, which grows in that area. However, some of the plants were in bloom and from the flowers it could be readily seen that the plant belonged to the genus *Syzygium*. The calyx-tube contracts gradually into the pedicel and the limb of the calyx is repandly lobed—two characters diagnostic of *Syzygium*. Moreover, the inflorescence (Fig. 12) is terminal—usually a feature of *Syzygium*.

On closer observation, the leaves also proved to be quite distinct from those of *Eugenia simii*: the lower surface of the leaves was seen to be prominently pinnately-veined, whereas in *E. simii* the secondary and tertiary veins are obscure. Initial efforts to identify the plant failed as it could not be assigned to any of the species of *Syzygium* represented in the National Herbarium, Pretoria or the Natal Herbarium, Durban, largely because of its characteristic narrowly elliptic to narrowly oblong leaves. However, the specimens collected were later found to match closely Engler's description of *S. pondoense*. The only discrepancy was in the absence of bracteoles, but these were probably caducous. There seems to be no doubt, therefore, that the plant is *S. pondoense*.

The syntypes of *S. pondoense* cited by Engler could not be located in Berlin Herbarium, so it was assumed that they were destroyed during World War II. All attempts to find duplicates of the syntypes were unsuccessful, therefore it was decided to select a neotype, *A. E. van Wyk & F. Venter* 1336 (PRE, neotype; PUC; NH).

* Reduced by White (1977) to *Eugenia capensis* (Eckl. & Zeyh.) Sond. subsp. *simii* (Dümmer) F. White.



FIG. 12.—*Syzygium pondoense*. Flowers on terminal thyse, at first with white stamens, later with persistent styles only (Van Wyk & Venter 1336).

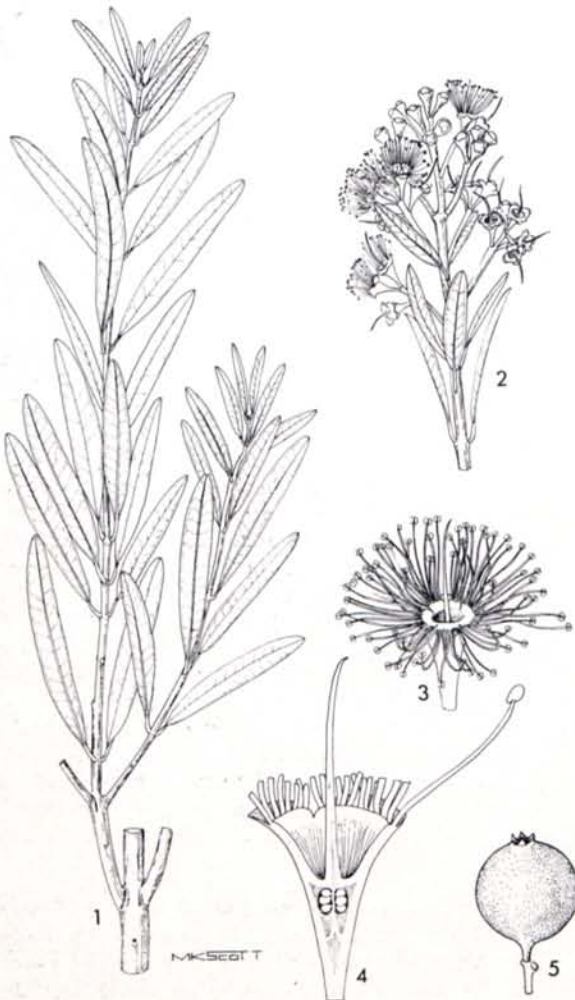


FIG. 13.—*Syzygium pondoense*. 1, shoot with leaves, $\times 0,75$; 2, inflorescence, $\times 0,75$; 3, flower after anthesis, $\times 2$; 4, longitudinal section of flower, $\times 5$; 5, fruit (immature?) $\times 0,75$. (1 from Van Wyk 1620; 2, 3, 4 from Van Wyk & Venter 1336; 5 from White 10 568).

The following amplified description is based on observations in the field of plants growing in the Umtamvuna Nature Reserve near Port Edward and at the Mkweni River mouth south of Goss Point in the Transkei, as well as on available herbarium specimens from other localities. The fruit used for the description was obtained from the herbarium specimen, *White* 10568.

Syzygium pondoense Engler, Bot. Jahrb. 54: 341 (1917). Syntypes: Pondoland, *Beyrich* 137 & 159, *Bachmann* 918 (all B†). Neotype: Natal, 3130 (Port Edward); Umtamvuna Nature Reserve (—AA), 8/12/75, *Van Wyk & Venter* 1336 (PRE, neotype; PUC; NH).

A much-branched shrub or small tree 1–2 m tall, branched from the base or with a single trunk up to 15 cm diam.; branches reddish brown becoming grey when mature; young shoots tetragonous, glabrous. Leaves opposite, decussate, petiolate; lamina narrowly elliptic to narrowly oblong, (1,5) 3–3,5 (4,5) cm long, (3) 5–6 (10) mm broad; base cuneate, apex acute or bluntly acute, margin entire, incrassate and slightly revolute in dried specimens, coriaceous, dark green and shiny above, paler below, gland-dotted; venation pinnately net-veined with reddish tinged veins, midrib conspicuous on both sides, slightly sunken above and raised below; secondary veins 12–20 pairs, branching subopposite from the midrib, spreading, less prominent above, more prominent below, fused into a longitudinal marginal vein approximately 0,5 mm from the margin of the lamina, tertiary veins more prominent below; petiole 2–3 mm long, ventrally canaliculate, reddish. Inflorescence a terminal thyse with a number of dichasia. Flowers subsessile, with hypanthium obconical, gradually tapering downwards into a pseudopedicel [vide Schmid, R. in Amer. J. Bot. 59 (4): 423–246 (1972)] and funnel-shaped above the ovary, length of hypanthium and pseudopedicel 6–8 mm, gland-dotted. Calyx with 4 rounded lobes on top of the hypanthium, each 2 mm wide, 1 mm long, obscurely gland-dotted. Corolla with 4 coherent petals, more or less oval, 2–2,5 mm long, calyptrate, falling off at the expansion of the stamens, not gland-dotted, white. Stamens usually 60–70,



FIG. 14.—*Syzygium pondoense* growing among rocks on an island in the bed of the Mkweni River in the Transkei (Van Wyk 1620).

inserted on the margins of the hypanthium, with filaments of various lengths, 3–6 mm long, strongly incurved in the bud, spreading at anthesis, free, white; anthers broadly oblong, 0,5–0,75 mm long, 2-theccous and each theca opening with a longitudinal slit. *Ovary* fused to lower part of hypanthium, bilocular and usually with 6 ovules per locule; style filiform, terete, tapering upwards, usually slightly recurved near the apex, 6–8 mm long, persistent for some time after shedding of the stamens; ending in an indistinct simple stigma, glabrous. *Fruit* subglobose, 1,3–1,5 cm long, 1–1,5 broad, with remains of the calyx lobes at the apex. *Seed* globose, c. 1 cm diam., brown. FIG. 13.

NATAL.—3130 (Port Edward): Umtamvuna Nature Reserve (–AA), *Van Wyk & Venter* 1330; 1331; 1332; 1336 (PRE: PUC); *White* 10568 (PRE; NH).

CAPE.—3129 (Port St. Johns): Lusikisiki Dist.: Mkwani River Mouth S. of Goss Point (–BD), *Van Wyk* 1619; 1620; 1621 (PRE, PUC). Without precise locality: Bizana distr.: Umzamba bridge, *Acocks* 13376 (PRE).

LOCALITY UNKNOWN.—*Millar s.n.* (*Herb. Forestry* 4221, sub *PRE No.* 2885).

Herbarium records show that the species is confined to rivers in the districts of Port Shepstone, Bizana and Lusikisiki. Plants from both the Umtamvuna and Mkwani Rivers (Fig. 14) grow quite near the coast. The plants occur, often in abundance, among Table Mountain Sandstone rocks mainly on islands in river beds. The amount of debris deposited on the plants indicates that they are periodically partly or fully submerged.

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