

LAURACEAE

A NEW GENERIC RECORD FOR SOUTH AFRICA AND A NEW SPECIES

Beilschmiedia natalensis J. H. Ross, sp. nov., affinis incerta.

Arbor sempervirens, 9–20 m alta; ramuli novelli glabri. *Folia* opposita, 0,5–1 cm longe petiolata, petiolo supra canaliculato, glabro vel glabrescente; lamina elliptica, basi cuneata, apice acuta usque breviter acuminata vel subobtusa, 3,5–10 cm longa et 2–5 cm lata, coriacea, atro-viridis, glabra; costa media subtus distincte prominens, glabra; nervi laterales utrinsecus prominentes; reticulatio utrinque prominula. *Inflorescentiae* ad apicem ramulorum novellorum axillares; pedunculo subtiliter puberulae; bracteae mox caducae. *Flores* parvi, albi, $\pm 1,5$ mm longi et apice 2, 5–3 mm diam., glabri vel subtiliter puberuli, pedicellis gracilibus 2–4 mm longis, subtiliter puberulis. *Tepala* 6, ovato-triangulata, subaequalia, apice acuta, erecto-incurvata, $\pm 1,25$ mm longa et ± 1 mm lata, glabra vel subtiliter puberula. *Stamina* fertilia 9, quorum 6 exteriora sessilia, ± 1 mm longa et 1 mm lata, basi glabra, tepalis adnata, antheris introrsis; 3 interiora ± 1 mm longa et $\pm 0,9$ mm lata, filamentis subtiliter pubescentibus, antheris lateralibus usque subextrorsis, basi utrinsecus glandulis binis magnis, subglobulosis, ± 7 mm latis praedita; staminodia subsessilia, ± 1 mm longa, ovato-triangulata, puberula. *Ovarium* ovoideum, ± 1 mm longum et 0,8 mm diam., glabrum, in receptaculo immersum et in stylum brevem 0,6 mm longum erectum attenuatum. *Drupa* subglobosa, 1,5–2 cm diam., glabra.

TYPE: Natal, 3030 (Port Shepstone), Umdoni Park (-BC), 21 Dec. 1971, H. B. Nicholson 1140 (PRE, holo.; BOL, E, FHO, K, L, NH, NU, iso.).

Evergreen tree 9–20 m high; bark brown, scaly; young branchlets glabrous. *Leaves* opposite, petiole 0,5–1 cm long, canaliculate above, glabrous or glabrescent; lamina elliptic, cuneate basally, apex acute to shortly acuminate or subobtuse, 3,5–10 cm long and 2–5 cm wide, coriaceous, dark-green, glabrous; midrib distinctly prominent below, glabrous; lateral nerves in 5–8 pairs, prominent on both surfaces, erect patent, the basal ones often steeper, reticulation dense, prominent on both surfaces. *Inflorescences* axillary at the apices of the young branchlets; peduncle minutely puberulous; floral bracts small, soon deciduous. *Flowers* small, white, $\pm 1,5$ mm long and 2,5–3 mm in diameter apically, glabrous or minutely puberulous, pedicel slender, 2–4 mm long, minutely puberulous. *Tepals* 6, ovate-triangular, subequal, acute apically, erect-incurved, $\pm 1,25$ mm long and ± 1 mm wide, glabrous or minutely puberulous externally, pubescent internally towards the base. *Fertile stamens* 9, outer 6 sessile, ± 1 mm long and 1 mm wide, glabrous, adnate to the tepals basally, anthers introrse, obtuse; 3 interior

stamens ± 1 mm long and $\pm 0,9$ mm wide, filaments short, minutely pubescent, anthers lateral to subextrorse, a large subglobular gland ± 7 mm wide on either side basally; staminodia subsessile, ± 1 mm long, ovate-triangular, puberulous. *Ovary* ovoid, ± 1 mm long and 0,8 mm in diameter, glabrous, immersed in the receptacle, gradually merging into a short style 0,6 mm long; stigma \pm conspicuous. *Drupe* subglobose, 1,5–2 cm in diameter, glabrous; pedicel 0,8–1,4 cm long, cylindrical, glabrous.

NATAL.—2831 (Nkandla): Ngoye forest (-DC), Wells & Edwards 120 (K). 2930 (Pietermaritzburg): Nqutu Falls, just west of Krantzklouf Nature Reserve (-DB), K. H. Cooper 49 (NH); Moll, Cooper & Zaloumis 5668 (NH). 3030 (Port Shepstone): Umdoni Park (-BC), Nicholson 1140; 1140a (NH); Strey 10578 (NH); K. H. Cooper (NH). 3130 (Port Edward): Foster's Kloof, Craigadour Farm (-AA), Nicholson 1227 (NH); Swanepoel's Kloof, Beacon Hill East (-AA), Nicholson 1228 (NH).

It is now over ten years since the first specimen of this species was collected in the Ngoye forest in Zululand. However, as the specimen was sterile, its identity remained unknown. Some five years ago a fruiting specimen was collected near the Krantzklouf Nature Reserve but, once again, in the absence of flowers, the plant remained unidentified. Following the discovery of a large tree at Umdoni Park on the Natal south coast, the plant was kept under surveillance for any sign of flowers. The discovery and collection of good flowering material in December 1971, which finally enabled the plant to be identified as a *Beilschmiedia*, is due to the persistence and patience of Mr H. B. Nicholson. The collection of this flowering material by Mr Nicholson was soon followed by the discovery of several more plants much further south in the Port Edward area.

Beilschmiedia is a pantropical genus of ± 300 species occurring mainly in Asia, with relatively few species in Africa. The occurrence of a species of *Beilschmiedia* in Natal is very interesting as the nearest *Beilschmiedia* species occur in Angola and in Zambia. There is, therefore, a large geographical discontinuity between *B. natalensis* and the nearest species of *Beilschmiedia*. *B. natalensis* does not appear to be very closely related to any of the African species. It appears to be confined to kloof forests along the Natal coast.

B. natalensis has 2-valved anthers as in the case of *Cryptocarya* but, unlike all of our species of *Cryptocarya*, *B. natalensis* has opposite leaves.

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