

## HYACINTHACEAE

### *ORNITHOGALUM LAIKIPIENSE*, A SYNONYM OF *DRIMIA MACROCARPA*

The species *Ornithogalum laikipiense* L.E.Newton was recently described from Kenya (Newton 2003). Examination of the protologue and the ample illustrations that accompany it leave no doubt that the species has been incorrectly assigned to the genus *Ornithogalum* L. and is in fact a species of *Drimia* Jacq. In its broad sense, *Drimia* is distinguished from all other genera of Hyacinthaceae by its spurred, often deciduous bracts and short-lived flowers with caducous perianth, each lasting less than a day (Manning *et al.* 2004). All of these critical features are evident in *Ornithogalum laikipiense*, along with the loose, scale-like bulb tunics and hysternanthus flowering that is characteristic of many species of *Drimia*. Within the genus *Drimia*, *O. laikipiense* is allied to the small group of species previously segregated in the genus *Thuranthos* C.H.Wright, defined by the nodding flowers borne on elongate pedicels, reflexed tepals, and distinctive stamens in which the lower part of the filaments converge over the ovary to form a cage-like structure. The dark maculae on the leaf sheaths of *O. laikipiense* are also highly characteristic, and have otherwise been recorded in *Drimia* only among this group of species. Two species in this group are known from Kenya, *D. indica* (Roxb.) Jessop and *D. macrocarpa* Stedje, separated essentially on the basis of size. *D. macrocarpa* is a more robust plant (up to 0.9 m tall vs 0.5 m), with larger flowers (tepals 15–24 mm long vs 6–12 mm) and capsules (20–24 mm long vs 8–18 mm), borne on longer pedicels (30–42 mm long vs 12–30 mm) (Stedje 1987). Comparison with the dimensions given

for *O. laikipiense* leaves no doubt that this species is conspecific with *D. macrocarpa* and it is accordingly reduced to synonymy. The status of *D. macrocarpa* in relation to the southern African *D. angustifolia* Baker is uncertain and the two may prove to be conspecific on further study.

***Drimia macrocarpa* Stedje** in *Nordic Journal of Botany* 7: 664 (1987). Type: Tanzania, Mpanda Dist., Uruwira, Richards & Arasululu 26126 (holo., K).

*Ornithogalum laikipiense* L.E.Newton: 18 (2003), syn. nov. Type: Kenya, Laikipia Plateau, Roberts sub Newton 5567 (holo., K; iso., EA).

#### REFERENCES

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