

## OXALIDACEAE

### TAXONOMIC DELIMITATION OF *OXALIS ENGLERIANA*

In the most recent revision of *Oxalis* L. in southern Africa, Salter (1944) regards *O. engleriana* Schltr. and *O. henrici* F.Bolus as two separate species in the section *Angustatae* subsection *Multifoliatae*. He does, however, mention that *O. henrici* was only known to him from the type specimen [*Bolus 13079*, Worcester Division; near De Doorns, (BOL)] and comments on its close morphological affinity with *O. engleriana*. The type specimen of *O. henrici* appears to be starved and the leaves are underdeveloped. Based on field observations, Bayer (pers. comm.) regards *O. engleriana* and *O. henrici* as conspecific. No constant interspecific morphological evidence could be found to justify their separate taxonomic status.

In a comprehensive palynological review of the southern African members of *Oxalis*, Dreyer (1996) found the pollen of these two species to be identical, but quite different to that of the rest of the genus. Both have reticulate grains with large, open luminae, prominent intraluminary bacules and very distinct suprategical spinules. Elsewhere in the genus, such unique deviations

from the basic reticulate pattern always occur in monotypic groups. Although palynological evidence alone is mostly not enough to substantiate taxonomic delimitations, we believe that in this instance it provides conclusive support to place *O. henrici* in synonymy under the older name *O. engleriana*.

#### REFERENCES

- DREYER, L.L. 1996. *A palynological review of Oxalis (Oxalidaceae) in southern Africa*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa.  
SALTER, T.S. 1944. The genus *Oxalis* in South Africa. *Journal of South African Botany* Suppl. Vol. 1: 1-355.

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