

## SHORT COMMUNICATION

### ***Omalanthus nutans* (Euphorbiaceae), the correct name for the 'Native Bleeding Heart' or 'Native Poplar' of Australia**

Preparation of a treatment of the genus *Omalanthus* for the 'Flora of Australia' has resulted in the conclusion that the types of *Croton nutans* G.Forst. (1786) (= *Omalanthus nutans* (G.Forst.) Guillemin) and *O. populifolius* Graham (1827) are conspecific. The name *C. nutans* is based on a J.R. & G. Forster collection from Tonga. *Omalanthus nutans* has been considered to occur in the Caroline Islands, Fiji, New Caledonia, Tonga and Vanuatu (Smith 1981; McPherson & Tirel 1987). The name *O. populifolius* is based on a specimen prepared from a plant cultivated at the Edinburgh Botanic Gardens. *Omalanthus populifolius* has been considered to occur in eastern Australia from the North Kennedy district of Queensland south to Nadgee in New South Wales (Airy Shaw 1981; James & Harden 1990).

*Omalanthus populifolius* is widely known as 'Native Bleeding Heart' or 'Native Poplar' (e.g. Stanley 1983; Floyd 1989; Hauser 1992; James & Harden 1990) and is commonly used as a pioneer species in gardens and landscape rehabilitation projects (Floyd 1990).

#### ***Omalanthus nutans* (G.Forst.) Guillemin**

*Croton nutans* G.Forst., *Fl. Ins. Austr. Prodr.* 67 (1786). *Omalanthus nutans* (G.Forst.) Guillemin, *Ann. Sci. Nat. II. Bot.* 7: 186 (1837). *Carumbium nutans* Muell.Arg. in DC., *Prodr.* 15(2): 1146 (1866).

**Type:** Tonga: Tongatapu, J.R. & G. Forster (K (photo at BRI!); lecto, Smith 1981: 560).

*Omalanthus populifolius* Graham, *Edinburgh New Philos. J.* [3]: 175 (1827). *Carumbium populifolium* (Graham) Benth., *Fl. Austral.* 6: 150 (1873), **synon. nov.**

**Type:** Hort. Edinb., [Graham], Apr.–June & 18 Sep. 1827, (holo E *n.v.*, *fide* Radcliffe-Smith (1987: 381); iso K (photo at BRI!)).

*Omalanthus pedicellatus* Benth., *London J. Bot.* 2: 232 (1843), **synon. nov.**

**Type:** Tonga: Vavao Fririty [?] Island, 1842, Barclay (holo K (photo at BRI!)).

*Carumbium platyneurum* Muell.Arg., *Linnaea* 32: 85 (1863), **synon. nov.**

**Type:** 'In Nova Hollandia prope Sidney', Vieillard (holo P *n.v.*, *fide* Airy Shaw (1981: 643)).

*Carumbium sieberi* Muell.Arg., *Linnaea* 32: 85 (1863), **synon. nov.**

**Type:** 'In Nova Hollandia', Sieber 640 (holo ?G-DC (fiche at BRI!)).

**Distribution:** *Omalanthus nutans* occurs in Melanesia (Fiji, New Caledonia, Tonga and Vanuatu) and Australia. In Australia it has been found in subcoastal parts of central and southern Queensland in the North Kennedy, South Kennedy, Port Curtis, Burnett, Wide Bay, Darling Downs and Moreton districts and in subcoastal New South Wales in the North Coast, Central Coast, South Coast, Northern Tablelands, Central Tablelands, North-Western Slopes and Lord Howe Island districts.

Floyd (1989) stated that the species also occurred in Cook district in north Queensland ('... to Coen'), Papua New Guinea and Indonesia. These records are misidentifications of *O. novoguineensis* (Warb.) Lauterb. & K. Schum. or *O. populneus* (Geisel.) Pax.

**Notes:** *Omalanthus nutans* is cultivated and sparingly naturalised outside its natural range and has been included in at least one regional flora account (Radcliffe-Smith 1987). Type material of *Carumbium sieberi* was stated to be at MEL by Radcliffe-Smith in his account of the genus for tropical east Africa. As far as can be ascertained, there is no material of *Sieber 640* at MEL and Radcliffe-Smith is not known to have either visited that institution or obtained material of *Omalanthus* on loan to K (J.H. Ross, pers. comm. 1994). There is a specimen of *Sieber 640* at G-DC (as observed on the fiche) and this may be the holotype of this name, although a search in the general collection at G is necessary to eliminate other candidates.

*Omalanthus nutans* may be distinguished from the superficially similar *O. novoguineensis* and the only other species present in Australia, *O. stillingifolius* F.Muell., with the following key.

- 1 Subshrub to 1.5 m high; leaves papillose below; floral bracts without dorsal glands ..... **O. stillingifolius**
- 1\* Shrubs or small trees to 10 m high; leaves glabrous below; floral bracts with dorsal glands ..... 2
  - 2 Floral bracts with 2 or 3 dorsal glands; ovary glabrous ..... **2. O. nutans**
  - 2\* Floral bracts with 7 or more dorsal glands; ovary papillose ..... **3. O. novoguineensis**

**Habitat:** Plants of *O. nutans* grow as pioneers in rainforest gaps and margins. Flowering and fruiting occur throughout the year, but are concentrated in the spring and summer months.

**Conservation status:** *O. nutans* is widespread and common in mainland Australia. The species is present in at least twelve conservation reserves (National Parks, Environmental Parks, Queensland Forest Service Scientific Areas, Nature Reserves) in south-eastern Queensland (Forster et al. 1991) and seventeen in New South Wales (Floyd 1989).

**Selected specimens:** Queensland: North Kennedy: Hinchinbrook Island, Shepherd Bay, *S.L. Everist 9673*, Aug 1970 (BRI); Paluma Range – Hervey Holding, *Hyland 7300*, June 1974 (BRI, QRS). South Kennedy: Carlisle Island, 35 km N of Mackay, *Sharpe 4602*, Dec 1986 (BRI); State Forest 652 Cawley, *Forster 8147 & McDonald*, Apr 1991 (BRI, K, L, MEL, QRS). Port Curtis: Boyne Range, Dan Dan Creek, *Gibson TOI99*, Nov 1990 (BRI); Three Moon Scrub, Kroombit Tops, *Sharpe 3443*, Dec 1983 (BRI). Burnett: Bunya Mountains State Forest, *Thorne 20039a*, Mar 1959 (BRI). Darling Downs: Gully N of Bald Mt, SW side of Girraween N.P., *McDonald 428*, Sep 1974 (BRI). Wide Bay: Mt Cooroy, *Sharpe 4897 & Bean*, Oct 1989 (BRI). Moreton: Mike's Logging Area, NNW of Bellthorpe, *Bean 2656*, Nov 1990 (BRI); Moss's Well, Spicers Gap, *Forster 12033 & Bird*, Oct 1992 (BRI, L, MEL, NSW, QRS); Lyrebird Ridge Road Pottery, Springbrook area, *Forster 7697*, Dec 1990 (BRI, CBG, K, L, MEL, MO, NSW, QRS).

New South Wales: Floral Reserve, Brunswick Heads, *Constable 6514* Nov 1965 (BRI, NSW); 22 miles NE of Singleton, *Story 7168*, Mar 1960 (BRI, CANB); Sailors Bay, Sydney, *Burgess*, Dec 1965 (BRI, CBG).

Vanuatu: Aneityum, Anelgauhau Bay, *Wilson sub Kajewski 976*, Aug 1929 (BRI).

New Caledonia: Mt Rembai, above Col d'Amieu, *McPherson 5748*, June 1983 (BRI ex MO).

Fiji: Talevu, Wainavesi (Gatward's Farm), *Koroiveibau* Dept. Agric. 11269, Apr 1958 (BRI).

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