

BISTELLA ADANS. VERSUS VAHLIA THUNB.
(VAHLIACEAE)

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(received October 30th, 1965)

The somewhat peculiar genus *Vahlia* Thunb. (1782) was formerly regarded as an anomalous member of the *Saxifragaceae*, but in 1959 it was segregated as the monotypic family *Vahliaceae* by DANDY (in HUTCHINSON, *Fam. Fl. Pl.* ed. 2, 1: 461). The genus includes about three species, all of them highly variable in stature, flower size, and indumentum; this has resulted in the description of more than twenty "species", whose names now appear in synonymy. This note, however, is chiefly concerned with the generic name, since it appears that *Vahlia* Thunb. is not correct under the Code and must be replaced by *Bistella* Adans. (1763). In the synonymy under the new combinations, all the relevant names so far traced are included, but it may well be that an experimental approach to the problem of specific and infraspecific limits and the taxonomic value of the characters hitherto relied upon for differentiation would result in considerable changes.

Bistella Adans. (1763) was cited in the form "*Bistella* Lippi 243 – *Ascyroides* Lippi" and the name then fell into abeyance until it was resuscitated by Delile in 1826. He described plants collected by Cailliaud, and identified a number of them with those of Lippi. In particular, he identified Lippi 243 (and 244) with the Cailliaud plant which he named "*Bistella geminiflora* Delil. (*Descript. des plantes découv. par M. Cailliaud*, pl. II. fig. 4). – *Ascyroides* Lippi (*Manusc. nos. 243 et 244*).” It must be emphasized that the taxonomic identification of "*Bistella* Del." with *Vahlia* Thunb. has never been questioned, but the identity of Adanson's *Bistella* with *Bistella geminiflora* Del. has been overlooked; this species, as represented by Lippi's plant, is the type of the generic name *Bistella* Adans.

The resuscitation of Adanson's generic name does not affect the family name *Vahliaceae* since *Vahlia* Thunb. is a legitimate generic name although now relegated to synonymy. Conservation of *Vahlia* is not proposed, the genus being of little interest to any except taxonomic botanists.

The genus ranges from south-western Africa to the Orient, Pakistan and India and it occurs in arid and semi-arid areas.

Relevant literature citations and necessary new combinations are as follows:

Bistella Adans. *Fam. Pl.* 2: 226 (1763); *Del. Cent. Pl. Afr.* 7 (1826), & *Voy. Méroé* 2: 97, t. 2, f.2 (1826). Typus: *B. geminiflora* Del. [syn. tax. *B. digyna* (Retz.) Bullock].

Russelia Linn. f. Suppl. 24 (1781), non N. J. Jacq. (1760). Typus: *R. capensis* Linn. f. [*Bistella capensis* (Linn. f.) Bullock].

Vahlia Thunb. Nov. Gen. Pl. 2: 36 (1782); Hooker f. in Bentham & Hooker f. Gen. Pl. 1: 637 (1865); Engler in Engler & Prantl, Nat. Pflanzenf. III. 2A: 65 (1890) et ed. 2, 18A: 166 (1930). Typus: *V. capensis* (Linn. f.) Thunb. [*Bistella capensis* (Linn. f.) Bullock].

***Bistella dichotoma* (Murray) Bullock, comb. nov.**

Heuchera dichotoma Murray, Comm. Gotting. 64, t. 1 (1772).

Oldenlandia pentandra Retz. Obs. Bot. 4: 22 (1786).

Vahlia oldenlandioides Roxb. Fl. Ind. 2: 89 (1832); Hooker f. & Thomson, Journ. Linn. Soc. 2: 74 (1857); Oliver, Fl. Trop. Afr. 2: 384 (1871); Hutch. & J. M. Dalz. Fl. W. Trop. Afr. 1: 106 (1927).

V. oldenlandiae DC. Prodr. 4: 54 (1830).

V. tomentosa DC. l.c.

V. ramosissima DC. l.c.

V. cordofana Hochst., Flora 24 (1): Intell. 43 (1841).

V. macrantha Klotzsch in Peters, Reise Mossamb. Bot. 175 (1862).

V. dichotoma (Murray) Kuntze, Rev. Gen. 227 (1891); Keay in Hutch. & J. M. Dalz. Fl. W. Trop. Afr. rev. ed. 1: 120 (1954).

V. pentandra (Retz.) C. E. C. Fischer, Bull. Misc. Inf. Kew 1932: 56 (1932).

***Bistella digyna* (Retz.) Bullock, comb. nov.**

Oldenlandia digyna (Retz.) Obs. Bot. 4: 23 (1786).

Bistella geminiflora Del. Cent. Pl. Afr. 7 (1826) & Voy. Méroé 2: 97, t. 2, fig. 2 (1826), *typus nominis generici*.

Vahlia weldenii Reichb. Ic. Bot. Exot. 1: 62, t. 91 (1827); DC. Prodr. 4: 53 (1830); Boiss. Fl. Orient. 2: 799 (1872).

V. sessiliflora DC. l.c. 54.

V. silenoides DC. l.c.

V. viscosa Roxb. Fl. Ind. 2: 89 (1832); Hooker f. & Thomson, Journ. Linn. Soc. 2: 74 (1857); Oliver, Fl. Trop. Afr. 2: 383 (1871); Hutch. et J. M. Dalz. Fl. W. Trop. Afr. 1: 106 (1927).

V. digyna (Retz.) Kuntze, Rev. Gen. 227 (1891); Keay in Hutch. & J. M. Dalz. Fl. W. Trop. Afr. rev. ed. 1: 120 (1954).

V. menyharthii Schinz, Bull. Herb. Boiss. Sér. 2, 2: 944 (1902).

V. somalensis Chiov. Fl. Somalia 170 (1929).

V. goddingii Bruce, Bull. Misc. Inf. Kew 1940: 49 (1940).

***Bistella capensis* (Linn. f.) Bullock, comb. nov.**

Russelia capensis Linn. f. Suppl. 175 (1781), *typus nominis generici*.

Vahlia capensis (Linn. f.) Thunb. Nov. Gen. Pl. 2: 36 (1782), *typus nominis generici*; DC. Prodr. 4: 53 (1830); Harvey in Harvey & Sonder, Fl. Cap. 2: 306 (1862); Oliver, Fl. Trop. Afr. 2: 384 (1871); Hiern, Cat. Afr. Pl. Welw. 1: 324 (1896).

V. capensis var. *verbasciflora* Oliver, l.c.; Hiern, l.c.

V. cynodonteti Dinter, Deutsch-Sudw.-Afr. 71 (1909), *nomen*.

V. glandulosa Schltr. ex Engler in Engler & Prantl, Nat. Pflanzenfam. ed. 2, 18a: 166 (1930).

V. verbasciflora (Oliver, *pro var.*) Mendes, Memór. Junta Invest. Ultramar. Sér. 2, 19: 12 (1960).