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AN UNTENABLE GENERIC NAME IN ACANTHACEAE

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In June, 1944, Dr. Burch H. Schneider of the department of animal husbandry of West Virginia University wrote Mr. Harlan P. Kelsey, chairman of the editorial committee of Standardized Plant Names, stating that, at the request of the animal nutrition committee of the National Research Council, he was preparing a monograph on the composition of feeding stuffs and their digestibility by farm animals. He sought help with regard to certain scientific and common plant names not appearing in Standardized Plant Names. Mr. Kelsey referred this request to me and, since that time, Dr. Schneider has addressed a number of inquiries to me.

Among the plants discussed by Dr. Schneider is the acanthaceous *Disperma trachyphyllum* Bullock of Tanganyika. I called Dr. Schneider's attention to the untenability of this name and told him I was referring the matter to Mr. E. C. Leonard of the Smithsonian Institution, one of whose specialties is *Acanthaceae*, with the suggestion that he rename the plant. Mr. Leonard later informed me that he had discussed the matter with his chief, Dr. W. R. Maxon, who, in turn, communicated with Dr. E. D. Merrill, and that Dr. Merrill advised that Mr. Leonard recommend the name *Disperma* for conservation. Despite my urging, Mr. Leonard has declined to do this and suggests that I publish a note on the matter myself.

Under Art. 61, the name *Disperma* is clearly illegitimate. I seriously doubt that the genus is sufficiently prominent, large, or

economically important to justify overriding that rule by conserving the name, or that the name conforms to such conservation standards as are set up by Art. 21. I propose, therefore, to rename the genus as follows, and with as little alteration from the original as possible:

Duosperma nom. gen. nov. DISPERMA C. B. Clarke in W. T. Thiselton-Dyer, Fl. Trop. Afr. **5** (1): 79 (1899), not *DISPERMA* J. F. Gmelin, Linn. Syst. Nat. ed. 13, **2:** 885, 892 (1791).

Gmelin's monotypic *Disperma* is, of course, a synonym of the rubiaceous partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens* L.). Clarke's homonymous *Disperma* belongs to *Acanthaceae*, tribe *Ruellieae*, with close affinities to *Hygrophila* and *Dyschoriste*. The genus consists of perhaps a dozen, mostly rather small, shrubby, undershrubby, herbaceous or somewhat scandent plants native to tropical Africa, except for one species in the Cape region. The leaves mostly are rather small; the mostly small flowers are in axillary clusters; calyx 4- or 5-cleft or parted, the lobes narrow; bracts oblong, about equalling the calyx; stigmas 2; anthers 4; ovules 1 in each cell but sometimes with an abortive extra ovule present. In erecting this genus its author emphasizes its small, brown, woody, shining, *much flattened*, *ellipsoid*, *2-seeded* capsules.

Clarke designated no type. Presumably the first species he describes, *Disperma kilimandscharicum*, should be accepted as the type species. This is a small pubescent shrub, with small obovate toothed leaves; small hairy flowers, the calyx subequally 5-fid half way to base, the lobes of a linear-lanceolate type. The type locality is the base of Mt. Kilimanjaro, the twin-peaked highest mountain in Africa. This species is here renamed

Duosperma kilimandscharicum (C. B. Clarke), comb. nov., based on *Disperma kilimandscharicum* C. B. Clarke in W. T. Thistelton-Dyer, Fl. Trop. Afr. **5** (1): 80 (1899).

Concerning the economic significance of *Disperma trachyphyllum* Dr. Schneider writes me as follows: "The leaves . . . were fed to sheep in experiments reported by M. H. French in the Tanganyika Territory Report of the Department of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry for the year 1932. The digestibility of these leaves was determined. They do not appear to be of a very high nutritive value, but may possibly be fed in certain localities during times of great feed shortage."

It seems desirable to give the above plant a legitimate name:

Duosperma trachyphyllum (Bullock), comb. nov., based on *Disperma trachyphyllum* Bullock, Kew Bull. Misc. Inf. 1933 (10): 476 (1933).

This species is a "subshrubby herb", locally known as "Asbestos-bush", growing up to about 4 feet high and reported to form impenetrable thickets on stony hill slopes in the neighborhood of 4,000 feet elevation in Dodoma Province, Tanganyika. It has lightly puberulent to glabrate, quadrangular stems; elliptic to ovate leaves up to about 2 inches long and 1 inch wide, scabrous but not bristly above, and white flowers about 13 mm. long with a cylindric tube 8 mm. long.

It does not seem desirable to attempt any additional transfers of species to the generic name *Duosperma* at this time; that had probably best be referred to some future monographer or to the African botanists who know these plants well under field conditions.

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Leptoloma in New England.—Leptoloma cognatum (Schultes) Hitchcock has a very limited range in New England. Not yet reported from Maine or Rhode Island, it is known from the following localities in New Hampshire, all in the valley of the Merrimac River, listed in order, beginning with the northernmost: Concord, coll. *F. W. Batchelder;* Hooksett, coll. *F. W. Batchelder;* Bedford, coll. *M. L. Fernald & Ludlow Griscom;* Merrimack, coll. *M. L. Fernald & Ludlow Griscom;* Litchfield, coll. *C. A. Weatherby & Ludlow Griscom;* Hudson, coll. *C. A. Weatherby & Ludlow Griscom.*

Two stations are known in Vermont through collections from Hartford in the valley of the White River by *E. M. Kittredge;* and from Townshend in the valley of the West River by *Leston A. Wheeler.*

The only locality in Connecticut where it is known to occur is New Haven, which is not in a river valley. There it has been collected by *C. H. Bissell, R. W. Woodward and A. E. Blewitt.*

As to Massachusetts, Hitchcock in his Manual of the Grasses