

Two recently described spotted-leaved, endemic Kenyan Aloes

Colin C. Walker (c.walker702@btinternet.com)

Introduction

In *Bradleya* 29 Len Newton published two new species of endemic Kenyan Aloes: *Aloe tegetiformis* and *Aloe springatei-neumannii* (Newton, 2011). Since then I have grown and flowered the first of these, whilst I have observed the second species in flower at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh. These species were named the year our *Aloe* book was published (Carter *et al.*, 2011), hence their omission from that tome but they are included in the latest survey of the genus (Newton, 2020). As far as I am aware both these species are currently relatively uncommon in cultivation, hence this article.

Aloe tegetiformis

In February 1996 Len Newton received material of an *Aloe* collected by his late friend Gilfrid Powys in December 1995 on Mount Nyiru in northern Kenya. This plant grew into a dense clump which flowered in Len's Nairobi garden. Based on this material it was described as *Aloe tegetiformis* (Newton, 2011). Given space this plant forms dense, low-growing clumps or a carpet of rosettes from the dozens of newly emerging suckers, hence the name *tegetiformis*

from the Latin meaning *tegetis*, 'covering' or 'mat' and *-formis*, 'having the form of'.

My pot-restricted plant (figs 1 & 2) is more restrained but does have prostrate stems that branch from the base and are up to 30 cm long. The leaves are up to 12 cm long, 2 cm wide at the base, smooth, slightly glossy, bright green tinged with red with irregular paler markings; leaf margins are moderately toothed.

My plant has now flowered twice (figs 1 & 3)



Fig 1. *Aloe tegetiformis* in flower in a 15 cm diameter pot.



Fig 2. Close up of the stems of *A. tegetiformis*.

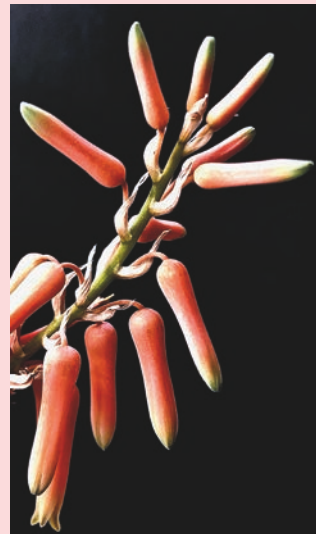


Fig 3. Details of the inflorescence of *A. tegetiformis*.



Fig 4. *Aloe springatei-neumannii* growing at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh.

but cannot be described as especially free-flowering. The inflorescence is up to 44 cm long bearing a moderately dense raceme 17 cm long. The flowers are unremarkable being orange-red, paler at the tips, 32 mm long, slender, slightly swollen at the base with the tepal tips only slightly recurved.

Its type locality is at the southern end of Ol Doinyo Nyiru in the Rift Valley Province of Kenya, where it was found by Gilfrid Powys “in deep shade, spreading like a carpet on the ground and trailing over rocks” (Newton, 2011). My plant is material from the type collection: *Powys 1259*. This species is currently

only known from the type locality and as far as I am aware it has not been recollected and there are no published photos of it growing in habitat.

The closest relative of *A. tegetiformis* appears to be *Aloe morijensis*, first described in 1979 from near the small town of Morijo, 275 km south of Mount Nyiru but now known to have a wider distribution in southwestern Kenya and northern Tanzania (Carter, 1994). *Aloe morijensis* has weak stems that start erect but later become decumbent with age and length; it also has larger leaves (up to 17 cm) and longer inflorescences (up to 50 cm).

Aloe springatei-neumannii

Len’s second new species, *Aloe springatei-neumannii*, is larger growing than *A. tegetiformis* with leaves up to 35 cm long which form rosettes maybe 50 cm or more across on stems up to 30 cm tall. I have yet to grow this species, so my observations are based on a brief encounter in the glasshouse at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh, where a plant was in flower during a visit in 2019 (figs 4 & 5). The plant was originally described as being solitary (Newton, 2011) but the Edinburgh plant had definitely branched

and therefore could be described as being caespitose (i.e. clump-forming). It forms dense rosettes of broad leaves (up to 9 cm across) that are mid green with numerous elongated paler blotches arranged in irregular transverse bands. The inflorescence is described as being up to 120 cm tall with three branches. For a spotted (maculate) *Aloe* the flowers are unusual in being yellow with slightly darker tips (fig 5). The base of the flower is prominently swollen with a very distinct constriction above the ovary. Flower shape but not colour is therefore



Fig 5. *Aloe springatei-neumannii* in flower at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh.

typical of the 41 species of maculate aloes (group B) in Carter *et al.* (2011), the majority of which have deep orange–dark red flowers.

The closest Kenyan relatives of *A. springatei-neumannii* are *A. lateritia* and *A. wollastonii* from which it differs most significantly in always having yellow flowers. However, occasionally and unusually, clones of *A. lateritia* do produce yellow flowers amongst populations of the typical brick-red flowers after which this species was named.

Aloe springatei-neumannii “is named for the two collectors who independently found it, Lawrie Springate of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh, and Michael Neumann, of the Botanic Garden, Bonn”. It is currently known only in Nyanza Province, in a botanically little-known area in the southwestern corner of Kenya (Newton, 2011). Again, like *A. tegetiformis*, there are no published photos of this species growing in habitat.

Acknowledgements

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