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Neoschumannia gishwatiensis (Apocynaceae, Asclepiadoideae-Ceropegieae) from Gishwati Forest, Rwanda—a third and new species from a disjunct African genus

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Abstract

The new species *Neoschumannia gishwatiensis* from Rwanda is described. It differs from the two other known species of *Neoschumannia* in the larger, emerald green, smooth, and brilliant, corolla lobes, with whitish clavate hairs at base. The phytogeography of the new species, as an Albertine Rift endemic, is discussed, and a key to the species is provided.

Key words: Albertine Rift, endemic

Introduction

The genus *Neoschumannia* Schlechter (1905: 38) was described by Schlechter, based on *N. kamerunensis* Schlechter (1905: 38). In the protologue, Schlechter pointed out that this genus is one of the most unusual members of Asclepiadaceae (now Apocynaceae-Asclepiadoideae) because of its corona consisting of three distinct, alternating series. He already correctly placed the plant into the Stapelieae-Ceropegiinae *sensu* Schumann (1895), nowadays treated under the tribe Ceropegieae Decne. ex Orbigny (1843: 339).

Neoschumannia is treated as a member of the tribe Ceropegieae subtribe Anisotominae Meve & Liede (2004: 70), the small sister group of the speciose subtribe Stapeliinae Don (1837: 109; Meve & Liede 2004). The type and only specimen from Cameroon was destroyed in the Berlin herbarium in 1943, and the species was rediscovered in Ivory Coast by Laurent Aké Assi (Bullock 1963, Meve 1995). In 1995, 90 years after the date of its description, *Neoschumannia kamerunensis* was recollected in Cameroon, on Mt. Cameroon (Meve 1997; Fig. 3). Subsequently, it was found in two additional localities, one in Cameroon, at Mt. Kupe, and another in the Central African Republic, in Dzanga Sangha National Park (Harris & Goyder 1997). Meve (1995) showed that the monotypic genus *Swynnertonia* Moore (1908: 308), with *S. cardinea* Moore (1908: 308), placed by its author in the tribe Marsdenieae, is another member of *Neoschumannia*, and made the new combination *Neoschumannia cardinea* (S.Moore) Meve (1995: 235). This species was only known from the type locality in Zimbabwe (Chirinda Forest, Melsetter District) and from S Tanzania (Ulanga District), until a collection of the third author (UM) in N Tanzania (Eastern Arc, Tanga Prov.; Fig. 3) added a third locality to the scattered distribution records. Meve (1995: 241) thus stated that the "distribution of *Neoschumannia kamerunensis* is consistent with the assumption of a high age for the taxon. […] If the considerable distribution gap of *Neoschumannia* across Central Africa is real and not merely the result of insufficient collecting, area fragmentation must be considered to explain the disjunction of at least 2500 km that exists between the two species." This is confirmed by the fact that *Neoschumannia* has no close relatives within the Ceropegieae and its characters, i.e. the growth form of a woody liana and the tripartite corona show mostly primitive traits (Meve 1995). With the staminal and interstaminal corona well-developed and shaped as in

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