

PODOCARPUS VITIENSIS IN THE MOLUCCAS (TAXACEAE)

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In a recent paper by Mrs. Gray [J. Arnold Arb. 43 (1962) 74] a new species of *Podocarpus* was proposed from Morotai, *P. filicifolius*. Inasmuch as the description of the leaves corresponds exactly with juvenile *P. vitiensis* (not previously reported from the Moluccas) and the description of the fruit corresponds exactly with *P. blumei* (whose range includes the Moluccas), it was of interest to confirm whether the fruit in question was attached to the foliage material described. An examination of the specimen (*Kostermans 1949*), in Leyden revealed that the fruit was collected separately and that sterile specimens of *P. blumei* were also collected in the general vicinity (*Kostermans 1660*, 50 m).

Dr. van Steenis kindly wrote to Dr. Kostermans concerning the particulars of the collection of these specimens. Kostermans writes:

'*Kostermans 1215* of G. Pare-Pare, 1000 m (apparently the same as the unnumbered specimen in Leiden), I picked from a sterile treelet c. 3 m high. There is an unidentified specimen of it in Herb. Bog., which looks to me like *P. vitiensis*.'

'*Kostermans 1660* is also sterile. I remember to have cut a large tree in Morotai which fell into a ravine after cutting and remained out of reach; that was a *Podocarpus* and presumably we have picked some fruits from the ground.'

'I quite well remember the collecting of *P. vitiensis* on top of G. Pare-Pare; almost all of it (?) was sterile, but still I found it necessary to collect samples. *P. neriifolius* was certainly on this ridge, but no *P. blumei*.'

Mr. Kostermans' letter is not conclusive but does suggest the circumstances under which a loose fruit was placed with leaves separately collected. Inasmuch as both collections of sterile leaves and the separate fruit all belong to the same genus, the fruit could easily have been put with the leaves of a different species. The unnumbered Kostermans collection is also to be found in Kew and the Arnold Arboretum without associated fruits.

There is no reason, after reviewing the evidence above, to suppose that a new entity exists in Morotai; the name *P. filicifolius* must therefore be placed in synonymy. However, as was indicated above, *P. vitiensis* has not before been reported from the Moluccas and the collection of Kostermans extends its range well west of the nearest known location around the Wissel Lakes. This is yet another link between the flora of the Moluccas and New Guinea.