

LASIOCOCCA BREVIPES (EUPHORBIACEAE): A NEW COMBINATION

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SUMMARY

Lasiococca brevipes (Merr.) Welzen & S.E.C. Sierra is a new combination based on *Mallotus brevipes* Merr. The new combination replaces *Lasiococca malaccensis* Airy Shaw, which appears to be a later synonym. The species is very rare, but widespread and seemingly with a very disjunct distribution, found in Sumatra, the Philippines, Sulawesi, and the Lesser Sunda Islands.

Key words: *Lasiococcus*, Euphorbiaceae, Malesia, Philippines.

INTRODUCTION

A recent revision of *Mallotus* Lour. (Euphorbiaceae) resulted in finding a few odd Philippine specimens, identified under various names: *Mallotus resinusus* (Blanco) Merr., *Mallotus muricatus* Müll. Arg. (name a synonym of *M. resinusus*), and *Mallotus brevipes* Merr. The material identified as *M. muricatus* (*R.S. Williams 2968*) appeared to be isotypes of *M. brevipes* (Merrill, 1914).

The specimens have whorled to subopposite leaves (terminal leaves opposite), they lack glandular and stellate hairs (typical for *Mallotus*), the petiole is very short, the leaf base narrowly heart-shaped, and the ovary/fruits have short papillae with a single to a few long, sharp pointed hairs. The specimens with staminate flowers show branching stamens. This combination of characters is typical for *Lasiococca* Hook. f.

Lasiococca was recently revised (Van Welzen, 1998). The genus is difficult to recognise, a synonym of *L. comberi* Haines was even described in the Celastraceae: *Euonymus auriculatus* Craib (Van Welzen, 2002). In Malesia only a single species is known, *L. malaccensis* Airy Shaw (1968), of which material is very scarce: the type specimen from the Malay Peninsula, and two sterile specimens from Sulawesi and the Lesser Sunda Islands in Indonesia. The Philippine material (four specimens from Mindanao) fits nicely in this distribution, and all specimens have the character typical for *L. malaccensis*: hair tuft domatia. However, most of the Philippine specimens deviate somewhat, the branches and petioles are hairy (subglabrous in the non-Philippine specimens), the leaves are smaller, the pistillate sepals somewhat smaller, and the pistillate pedicels much shorter. Two specimens bridge the gap: *BS (Mesa) 27500* and *FB (Miranda) 18270*. Both have larger leaves and the former is also subglabrous. This only leaves the pistillate characters for species delimitation (staminate flowers and fruits were still unknown for *L. malaccensis*), and these differences can just be due to geographic variance.

Thus, *Mallotus brevipes* is synonymised with *Lasiococca malaccensis*. The epithet *brevipes* is older (Merrill, 1914) than *malaccensis* (Airy Shaw, 1968), but *M. brevipes* Merr. is seemingly a later homonym of *M. brevipes* Pax ex Engl. (Engler, 1895; = *Acalypha subsessilis* Hutch.; see Pax & Hoffmann, 1914). However, *M. brevipes* Pax ex Engl. is a nomen nudum, thus invalid and the name *M. brevipes* Merr. is legitimate and should replace *malaccensis*. The new combination, together with a complete description, including staminate and fruit details, is given here. The generic description can be found in Van Welzen (1998).

***Lasiococca brevipes* (Merr.) Welzen & S.E.C. Sierra, comb. nov.**

Basionym: *Mallotus brevipes* Merr. (1914) 487; Pax & K. Hoffm. (1919) 19; Merr. (1923) 432; Airy Shaw (1983) 35. — Type: *R.S. Williams 2968* (holo PNH⁺; iso NY, 2 sheets), Philippines, SE Mindanao, Davao Prov., between Digas and Santa Cruz.

Lasiococca malaccensis Airy Shaw (1968) 406; Whitmore (1973) 104. — Type: *SF (Kiah) 37231* (holo SING n.v.; iso K n.v., L), Peninsular Malaysia, Malacca, Batang Malakka Forest Reserve. *Lasiococca* sp.?: Airy Shaw (1982) 26, pro *bb 26278* (L), Celebes, Ond. Kolaka, Mala-mala.

Tree up to at least 8 m high; flowering twigs c. 2 mm thick. *Bark* smooth, whitish. *Stipules* c. 2.3 by 0.9 mm. *Leaves*: petiole 1–4 mm long, subglabrous; blade obovate, 8–20 by 2.6–5.7 cm, ratio 3–3.5, on both sides smooth, glabrous except for hair tuft domatia on lower surface in axils of veins, venation raised on both sides, especially below, with 9–12 pairs of nerves. *Staminate inflorescences* up to 3 cm long; bracts broadly ovate, c. 1 by 1.3 mm; bracteoles elliptic, c. 0.8 by 0.3 mm. *Staminate flowers* c. 5.5 mm in diameter; pedicel c. 1 mm long; sepals c. 3.4 by 1.9 mm; androphores up to 4.5 mm long, anthers c. 0.3 by 0.5 mm. *Pistillate flowers*: bracts and bracteoles caducous; pedicel 0.8–7 cm long, (sub)glabrous; flowers 1–1.3 cm in diameter; sepals 4 or 5, elliptic, 3.2–8.2 by 1–3.8 mm, apex cuspidate, subglabrous; pistil c. 3.5 by 2 mm; style 0.5–1.2 mm long; stigmas c. 1.8 mm long. *Fruits* c. 6 by 5 mm, thin-walled; column 4.5–4.8 mm long. *Seeds* ellipsoid but flattened adaxially, c. 4.8 by 4 by 3.5 mm.

Distribution — Very disjunct in Malesia: Malaysia (Malacca), Philippines (Mindanao), Sulawesi (Sulawesi Tenggara), and Lesser Sunda Islands (Flores).

Habitat & Ecology — Apparently a very rare species. In Malaysia on hill slopes. Flowering: March to June; fruiting: June.

Vernacular names — Philippines: Talag (Magindanao; Merrill, 1923). Lesser Sunda Islands: Flores: Mborong.

Note — Philippine specimens with more hairy branches and petioles, usually smaller and relatively broader leaves, shorter pistillate pedicels and sepals.

Specimens studied:

bb series 26278 (Sulawesi); *FB series 18270* (Miranda), *27500* (A. de Mesa) (Mindanao); *Schmutz 2999* (Timor); *SF series 37231* (Malacca); *Warburg 14820* (Mindanao); *R.S. Williams 2968* (Mindanao).

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