Stigmaphyllon patricianum-firmenichianum (Malpighiaceae), a new species from Loyalty Islands, New Caledonia

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Abstract

A new species of Stigmaphyllon (Malpighiaceae) is described: Stigmaphyllon patricianum-firmenichianum Butaud. It is restricted to the coral islands of Ouvéa, Lifou and Maré in the Loyalty Islands Province (New Caledonia) and is most similar to S. discolor (Gand.) C.E.Anderson, known from New Caledonia and Solomon Islands. Previously, plants now known as S. patricianum-firmenichianum were included in Stigmaphyllon taomense (Baker f.) C.E.Anderson, endemic to the northern part of Grande-Terre and Belep Islands (New Caledonia). A new circumscription of S. taomense is proposed. The regional key for New Caledonian species of Stigmaphyllon is updated.

Keywords

Stigmaphyllon, Ryssopterys, Malpighiaceae, Loyalty Islands, New Caledonia

Introduction

The family Malpighiaceae is represented by three native genera in New Caledonia: Acridocarpus Guill. & Perr. with a single endemic species, Tristellateia Thouars with one indigenous species, and Stigmaphyllon A.Juss. with eight indigenous species, of which five are endemic (Morat et al. 2012); a sixth endemic is added here.
Stigmaphyllon was recently revised by Anderson (2011, 1997) in both the Old and the New World. The Old World species, known from South-East Asia and the Western Pacific, traditionally had been assigned to the genus Ryssopterys A.Juss., which was found to be nested in Stigmaphyllon (Davis and Anderson 2010). Anderson (2011) recognized this group as Stigmaphyllon subg. Ryssopterys, comprising 21 species, of which ten were described as new.

Of the New Caledonian species of Stigmaphyllon, only one is known in the Loyalty Islands, which Anderson included in Stigmaphyllon taomense (Baker f.) C.E.Anderson, a species of Belep Islands and the northern part of Grande-Terre, the main island of the New Caledonian archipelago, ca. 200 km west of the Loyalty Islands (Anderson 2011; Baker 1921). Formerly, specimens from the Loyalty islands (Lifou or Maré) were labelled Ryssopterys timoriensis (DC.) A.Juss. (e.g., Schmid 1966, 1967), a synonym of S. timoriense (DC.) C.E.Anderson; S. timoriense is not known from New Caledonia (Anderson 2011).

Examination of living plants and herbarium specimens, and discussions with specialists of the genus Stigmaphyllon (C.E. Anderson, pers. comm. 2014) and New Caledonian flora (G. Gâteblé, pers. comm. 2014) revealed that the Loyalty Islands taxon differs from S. taomense. It is here described as S. patricianum-firmenichianum. Stigmaphyllon subg. Ryssopterys now includes 22 species, of which nine occur in New Caledonia.

**Systematics**

*Stigmaphyllon patricianum-firmenichianum* Butaud, sp. nov.

urn:lsid:ipni.org:names:77149114-1

**Type.** New Caledonia, Loyalty Islands, Ouvéa, Banutr, bord de route menant à l’aéroport, 20°38.345’S, 166°33.726’E, 11 m alt., liane de 5 m à fleurs mâles de couleur jaune, en lisière de forêt secondaire à Podonephelium et Elattostachys, 17 December 2013, J.-F. Butaud 3346 (holotype NOU!, isotype P!).

**Diagnosis.** Stigmaphyllon patricianum-firmenichianum is most similar to S. discolor (Gand.) C.E.Anderson and S. mcphersonii C.E.Anderson in the tomentose vesture of the abaxial surface of the blade which differentiates them from the other New Caledonia Stigmaphyllon species. Stigmaphyllon patricianum-firmenichianum differs from S. discolor by the number of stamens, respectively 10 and 12–16, and by the number of flowers in each umbel, respectively 4–9 and 8–18(–20), and from S. mcphersonii by the number of functional styles of the male flowers, respectively 3 and none (styles absent or rarely 1, rudimentary and without stigma), by the sepals length, respectively 2.8–3 mm and 1.5–2 mm, by the petals length, respectively 8–10 mm and 6–27 mm, and by the dorsal wing of samara, respectively 2.6–2.9 cm and 1.7–2 cm long.

**Description.** Liana to over 8 m long; young stems tomentose, the vesture caducous in older parts, eventually becoming glabrate to glabrous. **Blade** of the larger leaves 4.8–7.5 × 3–5.4 cm, suborbicular to broadly ovate or ovate, apex emargin-
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Figure 1. Male flowers of Stigmaphyllon patricianum-firmenichianum Butaud on Ouvéa atoll in December 2013 (specimen Butaud 3346).

ate to obtuse, acute or apiculate, base cordate to truncate, adaxially tomentose or sericeous when young, soon glabrescent to glabrous or with some hairs retained on costa, secondary veins and near the petiole, abaxially tomentose, eventually sericeous in older leaves, but in some leaves the vesture unevenly deciduous except close to the costa and at the apex and the petiole where always dense, secondary veins 4–7 pairs, prominent abaxially; marginal glands 0.1–0.3 mm diam.; petiole 1.3–2.6 cm long, tomentose, in older leaves the vesture sloughed off in patches, with a pair of glands borne at apex or partly on the base of the blade above insertion of the petiole,
each gland 0.5–0.6 mm diam., slightly prominent; stipules 1 on each side of petiole, narrowly triangular, bractlike, to 1 mm long, abaxially tomentose, sometimes hidden by stem vesture. **Hermaphrodite flowers** 5–9 in each umbel or condensed pseudoraceme; umbels solitary or borne in dichasia; inflorescence stalks 1.1–2.9 cm long, often terminating a pair of foliaceous bracts, peduncles 3–5 mm long, pedicels 4–8 mm long, both tomentose; bracts c. 1 mm long, narrowly triangular, bracteoles c. 1 mm long, narrowly triangular, bracts and bracteoles abaxially tomentose. **Sepals** 5, 2.8–3 × 2.2–2.5 mm, orbicular or broadly ovate, abaxially densely sericeous but often glabrous along the margin. **Petals** 5, yellow, obovate with a claw 0.5–1 mm long, limb 8–10 × 5.5–7 mm, base acute or truncate, margin subentire or shallowly erose. **Stamens** 10; filaments c. 3 mm long; anthers without apiculum, glabrous. **Ovary** c. 1.6 mm long; 3 free styles c. 3.5 mm long, c. 0.1 mm diam., stigma c. 0.3 mm diam., peltate. **Male flowers** in inflorescences, and with sepals and petals, similar to hermaphrodite flowers: stamens 10, filaments c. 3 mm long; anthers without apiculum, glabrous; ovary rudimentary, a tiny mound of tissue embedded in a tuft of hairs; styles 3, c. 3 mm long, c. 0.1 mm diam., free or 2 variously united, stigma c. 0.3 mm diam., peltate. **Fruit**: a schizocarp splitting into 3 samaras, pedicels 4–7 cm long. **Dorsal wing of samara** 2.6–2.9 × 1.1–1.4 cm; nut 4–5 mm long, c. 4 mm diam., broadly ovoid to spheroid, with prominent ridges, lateral winglets absent; areole 2.5–3 mm long and wide.

**Phenology.** Flowers (emitting a pleasant odor) from November to April; fruits from February to May.

**Distribution.** New Caledonia, endemic to Loyalty Islands; known only from Ouvéa, Lifou and Maré islands. Not recorded on the smaller islands of Beautemps-Beaupré, Tiga and Walpole.

**Habitat.** This species is restricted to the calcareous soils of uplifted atolls between 5 and 90 m elevation, in littoral open forest or shrubland, and in the interior on plateau open forest or shrubland. It is also commonly found among the naturally open and shrubby vegetation of the cliffs between littoral and plateau. This vine is characteristic of fallows, young shrublands and secondary forests following shifting cultivation. It is also commonly found along roads and close to villages in open and sunny areas. The vegetation is often composed of trees and shrubs, such as *Acacia spirorbis* Labill., *Acronychia laevis* J.R.Forst. & G.Forst., *Elattostachys apetala* (Labill.) Radlk., *Glochidion billardierei* Baill., *Morinda citrifolia* L., *Pipturus argenteus* (G.Forst.) Wedd. var. *lanosus* Skottsb., *Podonephelium homei* (Seem.) Radlk., and *Polyscias bracteata* (RVig.) Lowry subsp. *bracteata*.

**Conservation status.** Using the categories and criteria of IUCN (2001), the IUCN Red List Category Least Concern (LC) for *S. patricianum-firmenichianum* is proposed. Indeed, this is a common vine of anthropized areas on the three islands, i.e. in villages, cultivated areas, fallows, shrubland, roadsides, and open littoral forest on the calcareous cliffs. No decline is estimated or has been documented.

**Etymology.** I am pleased to name this new species for Patrick Firmenich (b. 1962), former Chief Executive Officer of Firmenich, a leading Swiss company creating
fragrances and flavors. The Firmenich Charitable Foundation is supporting the sustainable management of the Loyalty Islands biodiversity, especially on Ouvéa atoll, a natural World Heritage site.
Common names. The common names recorded for *S. patricianum-firmenichianum* are “watoma” on Lifou (herbarium specimens Deplanche 74, Däniker 2468 & Bergeret 86; Däniker 1932; Lenormand 1999, 1968) and “tai” on Maré (herbarium specimen Däniker 2497; Däniker 1932; Dubois 1971; Lormée et al. 2011). No common name has been recorded on Ouvéa.

Discussion. *Stigmaphyllon patricianum-firmenichianum* is the sole member of the genus *Stigmaphyllon* in the Loyalty Islands. It is allied with *S. discolor* and *S. mcphersonii* with which it shares an abaxial tomentose vesture of the blade. Its inclusion under *S. taomense*, a species with an abaxially sericeous blade, by Anderson (2011), may stem from the patchily deciduous vesture of some leaves, which can give the impression of a sericeous blade. Moreover, *S. patricianum-firmenichianum*, *S. mcphersonii* and *S. taomense* have all 10 stamens, whereas *S. discolor* bears 12–16 stamens. Nevertheless, its closest affinity in New Caledonia apparently is with *S. discolor*, which occurs on most of the southern part of Grande-Terre and Isle of Pines. In South-East Asia and the Western Pacific, it is most similar to *S. albidum* (Blume) C.E.Anderson, which can be differentiated by the absence of a style in male flowers. This new species is also clearly different from the widely distributed *S. timoriense*, which has male flowers usually without styles and blades abaxially sericeous to glabrate.


Circumscription of *Stigmaphyllon taomense*


Type. New Caledonia, Mt Taom, 200 ft, 30 November 1914, *R.H. Compton* 2286 (holotype BM scan!).

Discussion. The description given by Anderson (2011) for *S. taomense* is still correct, despite the separation of *S. patricianum-firmenichianum* from it. The examination
of *S. taomense* specimens in NOU has shown some differences between Belep Islands and Northern Grande-Terre plants, especially the absence of marginal glands on the blade for the latter. Study of more specimens of both provenances may lead to the description of a new species endemic to Belep Islands.


### Key to New Caledonian species of *Stigmaphyllon*

(adapted from Anderson 2011)

1. Petiole flanked on each side by 2–3 stipules, to 2 cm long and leaflike..........
   - Petiole flanked on each side by 1 triangular stipule, to 1.5 mm long and bractlike (never leafy).................................2

2. Blades abaxially tomentose, the vesture patchily deciduous in some leaves but still dense at the base or the apex.................................3
   - Blades abaxially sericeous or glabrous on the entire surface ...................5

3. Umbels with 8–18(–20) flowers; stamens 12–16 ..........................*S. discolor*
   - Umbels with 4–9 flowers; stamens 10........................................4

4. Sepals 2.8–3 mm long; petals 8–10 mm long; male flowers with 3 styles, all free or 2 united; dorsal wing of samara 2.6–2.9 cm long.........................
   - Sepals 1.5–2 mm long; petals 6–7 mm long; male flowers without functional styles (styles absent or rarely 1, rudimentary and without stigma); dorsal wing of samara 1.7–2 cm long..............................*S. patricianum-firmenichianum*
   - Sepals 1.5–2 mm long; petals 6–7 mm long; male flowers without styles; blades 2.5–6 cm wide, narrowly lanceolate to elliptical to broadly elliptical to ovate ......

5. Blades abaxially sericeous, the vesture patchily deciduous in older leaves......
   - Blades abaxially glabrous or with some scattered hairs....................6

6. Pedicels entirely glabrous or the basal 1/4 sericeous, red .......*S. gymnopodum*
   - Pedicels densely sericeous, green but the colour obscured by the vesture.....7

7. Stamens 10; petals 6–7 mm diam.; male flowers without styles; blades 0.3–2.7 cm wide, linear to oblong to narrowly elliptical or narrowly lanceolate...
   - Stamens 12–18; petals 9–10 mm diam.; male flowers with styles; blades 2.5–6 cm wide, narrowly lanceolate to elliptical to broadly elliptical to ovate ......

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