



A new name for an African *Aspilia* (Compositae: Heliantheae: Ecliptinae)

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Summary. Work towards the Compositae for a checklist of the flowering plants of Guinea has shown that *Melanthera elegans* C.D.Adams belongs in *Aspilia* Thouars. An earlier ‘combination’ in the literature was not validly published, the authors also unaware of an earlier combination under the name *Aspilia elegans*. A new name, *Aspilia lisowskiana*, is provided for the Guinean species.

Key Words. Asteraceae, checklist, Guinea (Conakry), *Lipotriche*, *Melanthera*.

Introduction

Whilst checking and editing the checklist of Compositae for Guinea, as part of the project ‘Important Plant Areas in Guinea’ (supported by the Darwin Initiative of the Department of the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), UK government (Project Ref. 23–002)), a number of issues remained to be solved.

The basis of the checklist was the late Stanislaw Lisowski’s Flora account (Lisowski 2009), and his inclusion of *Melanthera elegans* C.D.Adams. I have earlier treated the genus *Lipotriche* DC. (Hind 2014), within which most of the African melantheras belong. However, I commented, under the ‘Excluded taxa/names’, on the position of *Melanthera elegans*, and its inclusion in *Aspilia* Thouars (Hind 2014: 9), noting that Lebrun & Stork (1997) had, without explanation, included the entity within *Aspilia*, and provided the name ‘*Aspilia elegans* (C. D. Adams) J.-P. Lebrun & Stork’, a combination that was not validly published. They were probably unaware of the combination in *Aspilia* of *Viguiera elegans* Gardner. Bentham & Hooker (1873: 372) had indicated that *Viguiera elegans* belonged amongst one of the three series of American taxa that they recognised in *Aspilia*; no formal combination was made as the epithet was not associated with the generic name. However, Jackson (1893: 217), in providing the name in a Roman typeface and referring back to Bentham & Hooker’s suggestion (as ‘*elegans*, *Benth. & Hook. f. Gen. ii. 372.–Bras.*’), effectively made the combination *Aspilia elegans* (Gardner) B.D.Jacks.

Although Wild (1965) included *Melanthera elegans* in his treatment of the African species, it clearly stood apart, not least by its long ray limbs. In Gerald Pope’s personal copy of a reprint of Wild’s later revision of African *Aspilia* (Wild 1966), Pope clearly perceived the

generic affinity of this taxon, with the key annotated as ‘ligules 2 cm + *elegans*’ at the couplet leading to ‘15. [*Aspilia bipartita*] (Wild 1966: 201), but Pope took this no further. Wild’s treatment of the African ‘*Melanthera*’ and *Aspilia* provided only a limited description of the achenes (Wild 1965: 1; 1966: 197), save indicating that the achenes of both genera were obovoid, compressed and ‘pubescent’. However, the distinction between the two genera was more evident in the pappus, that of ‘*Melanthera*’ with ‘0–c. 12 caducous ... often unequal, stiff barbellate or ciliate bristles’, while he recorded in *Aspilia* a ‘lacinate cupule often with (1)–2 (3, 4) barbellate setae in addition.’ There are other significant differences that I am aware of in the achene bases, the presence of elaiosomes at the base of the achenes in *Aspilia*, but their absence in *Lipotriche*. Adams (1964: 135) was quite explicit about the achenes, noting that they have ‘a conspicuous orbicular scale on each side at the base’ — an elaiosome. The pappus in ‘*Melanthera elegans*’ is indeed a cupule with a ‘few minute caducous bristles’ (Adams 1964: 135). Since this fully supports the inclusion of *Melanthera elegans* in *Aspilia*, a new name is proposed below.

New name

***Aspilia lisowskiana* D.J.N.Hind, nom. nov.** pro *Melanthera elegans* C.D.Adams, non *Aspilia elegans* (Gardner) B.D.Jacks. (Jackson 1893: 217).

<http://www.ipni.org/urn:lsid:ipni.org:names:60478261-2>

Melanthera elegans C.D.Adams, *J. W. African Sci. Assoc.* 8 (2): 135 (1963)[Aug. 1964]. Type: ‘GUINEA.–[Fouta Djallon] Hollandé Tossékéré, [15] October 1956,

Adam 12728 (Holotypus K; Isotypus IFAN); ... holotype: K(000453489); isotypes: IFAN, P(00072535).

'*Aspilia elegans* (C. D. Adams) J.-P. Lebrun & Stork', *Enum. Pl. Fleurs Afr. Trop.* 4: 250 (1997), name not validly published. Note: this 'combination' both lacked the citation of the place of publication of the basionym (i.e. contrary to Art. 41.5 of the Code — Turland *et al.* 2018), and would have been a later homonym of *Aspilia elegans* (Gardner) B.D.Jacks. if the place of publication had been cited. Elsewhere in this work, Lebrun & Stork (1997) clearly indicated new combinations with the abbreviation 'comb. nov.': such was not the case in this instance.

DISTRIBUTION. Guinea.

CONSERVATION STATUS. *Aspilia lisowskiana* is in the course of being assessed for its conservation status to support its protection in the wild using the Important Plant Area protocol as set out in Darbyshire *et al.* (2017). Since there are less than ten locations known, and threats are documented, it is expected to be assessed as Vulnerable using the IUCN system.

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