Guidia kraussiana
(THYMELAEACEAE)

NOMENCLATURE:

Accepted Name: Guidia kraussiana Meisn.

Approved by: GMC

References: See Bibliography *

Synonyms:
Lasiosiphon kraussii (Meisn.) Meisn.
L. kraussianus (Meisn.) Burtt Davy
L. kraussianus var. villosus Burtt Davy
L. hoepfnerianus Vatke ex Gilg
L. affinis Kotschy & Poyr
L. kerstingii Pearson
L. guineensis Chev.
Guidia hoepfnerianus (Vatke) Gilg
G. djurica Gilg
G. usingensia Gilg

Identification: All vouchers for general samples and re-collections were annotated by Bo Peterson.

FRACTIONATOR:

Farnsworth.

DESCRIPTION: Perennial herb arising from a swollen, fleshy root. Stems several to many, erect or ascending, usually pubescent and from 15-30 cm. tall but occasionally glabrous (green to reddish), simple and 6 cm. or less high. Leaves usually elliptic but sometimes linear, ovate or obovate, 1-5 cm. long and 5-25 mm. wide. Pubescence variable, glabrous to densely bluish or yellowish or rusty tomentose. Flowers yellow, to orange-yellow, the calyx tube stout or slender bearing a dense brush of erect white or yellowish-white hairs below the articulation, the petals very thinly membranous, oblong emarginate or ± deeply bisected, 1/3 - 1/2 as long as the calyx lobes.

ECOLOGY: Fire-maintained grasslands in upland areas, particularly in places that were recently burned.
Gnidia kraussiana

COMMENTS: Herbarium records would appear to be of little value in identifying areas where G. kraussiana might occur in abundance. More useful would be information on where burning is frequently practiced such as it appears at Mufindi, Tanzania. Other potential upland areas might be found in Natal, western Mozambique, Malawi, northern Nigeria and Cameroon.

G. kraussiana is extremely variable. Upon one's first encounter with this plant in the field, two or more species or varieties might be thought as occurring together. With a single population one can find purple- to green-stem glabrous plants, plants sparsely to densely pubescent and the pubescence varying from silvery to bluish or from rusty to white in color. Bo Peterson indicated that this variation is found throughout its range.

G. kraussiana is also recognized as belonging to the genus Lasiosiphon. Separation of the two genera weigh solely on the number of floral parts; 5-merous in Lasiosiphon and 4-merous in Gnidia. To Bo Peterson, this character seems less important when other related genera like Englerodaphne are considered. Peterson (1959) has proposed to lump Englerodaphne, Lasiosiphon and Arthrosolen with Gnidia. His view has been followed by Aymonin (1966) for relevant taxa in the Flora of Cameroun. However, botanists at Pretoria prefer to split the genus Gnidia, following the earlier views of Pearson and Wright.

The distribution of activity according to the narrow taxonomic view is interesting. All H & M active plants, thus far, fall into Englerodaphne and Lasiosiphon. Activity in Gnidia is limited to two species designated as N.R.

About 25 species might be recognized in Lasiosiphon; about five in Madagascar and the remainder concentrated in South Africa with one extending to India. Similarly, Gnidia may include 80 African-Madagascan species with a center in South Africa.

The family, Thymelaeaceae, centers in the southern hemisphere, particularly South Africa and Australasia. Raven and Axelrod (1974) believes the family originated in West Gondwanaland - also their suspected origin of Angiosperms.

USES: Regarded as exceedingly poisonous. Decoctions have been used to bathe wounds and bruises. Also reported to be a remedy for snakebites and sore throats.
REFERENCES: Literature:


REFERENCES: Literature Continued:


REFERENCES: Other:


Letter to R.W. Spjut dated March 25 (Comments on Variation of G. kraussiana)

Spjut, R.W., 1974. Memorandum dated March 26 to Dr. Perdue, "Identification of Gnidia sp. (Kenya) and other species of Gnidia - from telephone conversation with Dr. Bo Peterson in Sweden". ("The polymorphic forms of G. kraussiana found in Mufindi, Tanzania also occur elsewhere in tropical Africa and South Africa").

Memorandum dated January 31 to Dr. Perdue, "Plant Collections of Gnidia from Mufindi, Tanzania."

Memorandum dated January 21 to Dr. Perdue, "Thymelaeaceae" (cites nomenclature under which subject species was tested).

PREPARED BY: R. W. Spjut    DATE: August 9, 1977
January 31, 1974

Subject: Plant Collections of Gnidia from Mufindi, Tanzania

To: Robert E. Perdue, Jr., Chief
    Medicinal Plant Resources Laboratory

Populations of Gnidia, which resembled G. kraussiaceae, in Mufindi were common and extremely variable as to pubescence, color, height, and length and shape of leaves. I could not identify any character or combination of characters that could be used consistently to segregate these plants; thus, a few collections for cancer represent a polymorphic collection of individuals. A few populations of Gnidia observed seemed to be consistent or showed little morphological variation (ex. SPJ-3491). Also, each of the variable populations of Gnidia seemed to have their own characterization (based upon my intuition). Gnidia collected from different localities, which are represented by a different collector's number, should be treated as separate collections for fractionation but recognized as possibly the same species.

As for the voucher specimens, those specimens with the same numbers and different letters do not represent different collections for cancer, nor were they intended to represent different species, but rather a documentation of the variation I observed of similar species or one species in any particular locality. In general, the more variation observed, the more letters used, and the lowest and highest letters used represent the least common types. The letter 'A' was used for all glabrous types and all other letters in sequence represent pubescent types. Glabrous types were rarely seen - about one in several hundred or more plants - except in one locality in which about 50 percent of the population consisted of glabrous types and variation of these was indicated by two letters (ex. AA, AB, AC).

Not all localities of Gnidia were sampled for the cancer program, but all locations where I observed Gnidia, specimens were made in order for possibly a better comprehension of Gnidia in Mufindi, and possibly future taxonomic evaluation. The morphological variation in Gnidia seems to strongly suggest hybrid swarms.

Richard Spjut

Richard W. Spjut, Botanist
Medicinal Plant Resources Laboratory
Dear Mr Spjut,

The Thymelaeaceae-material from Tropical East Africa (58 mounted + 1 unmounted specimens), that I received from you on loan on March 21st, have today been returned to you by air.

I am very grateful to you for letting me see this valuable material - the more since I had so far never seen any of your collections before.

The specimens of Gnadia kraussiana were very variable with regard to pubescence, length and width of the leaves. The species is very polymorphic and it is not possible to separate it into subspecies and varieties.

Higgins No. 11741, the name of which was particularly asked for, is Gnadia lamprantha Gilg. Other specimens of the same species in this sending is Perdue 9365 and Spjut 3134.

The unmounted specimen (No . 3908) is Synaptolepis Kirkii Oliv. Unfortunately label is missing for this specimen, and I am gratefully looking forward to receiving all available data regarding this collection. On several specimens of this species I have previously noticed glands on the pedicels, but I have never before seen these glands in such abundance - nor have I seen them on tubes or sepals of the flowers.

Thank you very much as well for the 11 specimens of Gnadia, that we received as a gift to our herbarium.

To which collection belongs the wood-sample?

With best regards

Yours sincerely

(B. Peterson)

Curator
January 28, 1976

Richard W. Spjut, Botanist
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Agricultural Research Service
Northeastern Region
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Dear Mr. Spjut:

In reply to your letter to Dr. Farnsworth of January 6, 1976:

_Gnidia kraussiana_

All of the samples of _Gnidia kraussiana_ (PR-40807-40810) were highly active. PR-40807 was the least active. However, it appears that none of these samples was active as PR-23223 from the original collection.

_Hypoxis goetzei_

PR-40814  low activity

_Hypoxis spp._

PR-40811  inactive
PR-40812  low activity
PR-40813  moderate activity
PR-40815  low activity
PR-40816  moderate activity

We hope this information is useful to you.

Sincerely yours,

Geoffrey A. Cordell, Ph.D.

GAC/sam

cc:  N.R. Farnsworth, Ph.D.