

## *Cordyline ledermannii* (Agavaceae) of New Guinea

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### Introduction

Throughout New Guinea, from sea-level to c. 2000 metres altitude, the well-known ornamental *Cordyline fruticosa* is very variable in characters like leaf size and coloration. However, a cordyline I was shown in beech forest high in Schrader Range differs very much from *C. fruticosa* by its small stature and especially by its pendulous, compact, large-flowered inflorescence. The only published name to fit it is *C. ledermannii*, which was based by Krause (1925) on two collections made by Carl Ledermann in 1913. Those collections (which I have seen on the B website) also came from the Schrader Range. I have not been able to match the plant in the extensive New Guinea collections at CANB and so suspect that it might have a very restricted distribution. The crucial part of Krause's description is found in the size of the flowers, which he said were up to 2.4 cm long. The collections of mine cited below have flowers even larger.

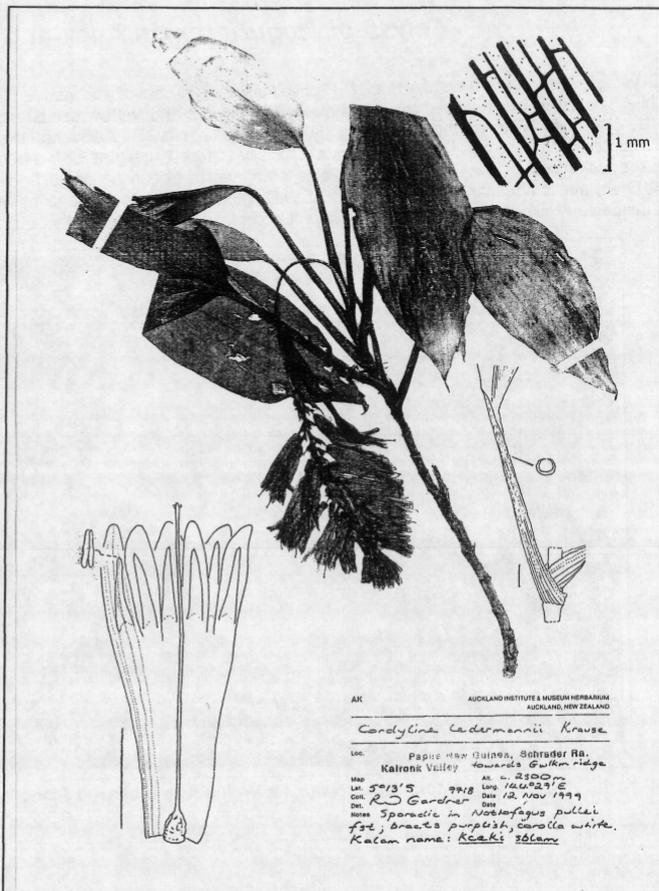
The Kalam people of the Schrader Range recognize that *C. ledermannii* is related to *C. fruticosa*. Their name for the latter is "sblam", and for the former, "kcheky sblam", this meaning the cordyline of the nature spirits, that is, the demons or goblins, of the range-top forests. I rather regret not being able to publish the euphonious combination "*Cordyline kicheki*".

### Description

*Cordyline ledermannii* Krause  
Treelet, not or hardly suckering, stem to c. 1.5 m tall, 1 cm diam.; glabrous in all

**Figure 1:** *Cordyline ledermannii* Centre. Photocopy of flowering stem (ROG 9718). Floriferous part of panicle is 10 cm long. Lower R. Petiole showing shape in Ls. Scale bar 1 cm. Upper R. Cleared portion of blade showing arrangement of nerves; specks in ground tissue are raphides and also smaller idioblasts (suberized cells?). Scale bar 1 mm. Lower L. Spent flower (ROG 9718). 6 equal short-lobed tepals; short flattened epitepalous filaments, one detached anther at left; trilobed stigma. Scale bar 1 cm.

parts; root system unknown. Leaves congested, to c. 35 cm long, the petiolar part well demarcated, c. 10 cm long, channelled, at midway c. 5 cm diam., the blade narrowly elliptic, to c. 27 x 6.5 cm, firmly chartaceous, on upper surface the longitudinal veins rather uniform and numerous (c. 0.5 mm apart), on lower surface c. 6-8 pairs rather more prominent than the others; cross-veins (in dried specimen) slightly more prominent on lower surface, usually not passing beyond a single pair of the longitudinal veins. Inflorescence apical, pendulous, c. 15 cm long, the decurved peduncle c. 5 cm long, 1 mm diam., distally with 1-2 reduced leaves (bracts) to 10 cm long; inflorescence unbranched or with one or two sub-basal branches from axils of leaf-like bracts, main rachis to c. 10 cm long, c. 30- flowered, flowering acropetally but



apparently most flowers opening together, floriferous along most of length but flowers somewhat congested distally; bracteoles 2 per node, scarious, obscurely denticulate, the lower bracteole c. 6 mm long, 1-nerved, the upper bracteole (prophyll) slightly shorter, broader, sometimes truncate-bifid at apex and 0-2-nerved; pedicel straight, 7 x 0.5 mm, articulate to flower base.

Perianth of 6 equal tepals, these 3-3.5 cm long, white with a purplish flush centrally and proximally, united for c. two-thirds their length into a cylindrical tube 0.8 mm diam. at mouth, the tepal lobes obtuse. Stamens 6, fused to tepals near the base of the lobes, filaments strap-like, anthers 0.4 mm long, medifixed, pollen white. Ovary c. 3 x 2 mm, at least when dry somewhat lobulate and vertically furrowed, 3-locular, ovules numerous, style apparently usually exerted by up to c. 5 mm at anthesis or just after. Fruit unknown.

#### Acknowledgements

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#### References

Krause, K. 1925. Cordyline. Pp. 554-558 in Lauterbach, C. Beiträge zur Flora von Papuasien. XII. Botanische Jahrb. 59: 505-567.  
Simpson, P. 2000. Dancing Leaves. Canterbury University Press, Christchurch.

Distribution: Papua New Guinea, Madang Prov., Schrader Range, c. 2200-2500 m; in forest (often *Nothofagus* as the dominant), not very common.

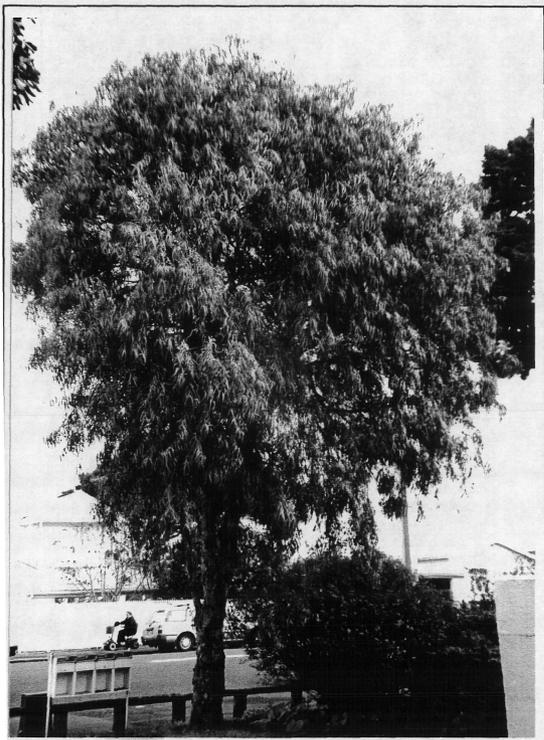
#### Notes:

1. According to my Kalam informant Ian Saem Majnep, nectar from the flowers is consumed by Honeyeater birds, and one or more kinds of Birds of Paradise take the fruit.

2. The flowers of the New Zealand cordylines are odorous, principally a scent of honey but also of sour milk and urine. My 9718 material, was brought in by a collector in the morning and examined by me in a wilted state that afternoon: I could detect no odour.

3. Another difference from the New Zealand species (and others ?) is that *C. jedermannii* has white rather than yellow pollen.

4. *C. jedermannii* is not mentioned by Simpson (2000).



## Occurrence of wilga (*Geijera parviflora*) in Auckland

Mike Wilcox

Wilga or Australian willow (*Geijera parviflora* Lindl.) is a tree belonging to the family Rutaceae. It occurs in Australia in the drier inland parts of South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland, and is a particularly characteristic tree of the western slopes and plains of New South Wales. It grows to c. 10 m tall and has a graceful habit, with narrow, drooping foliage. It is used as a street tree in Los Angeles.

Two fine specimens were recently located in Auckland - one at 854 Manukau Road in Royal Oak, and the other at 11 Stillwell Street in Mt Albert pointed out to me by Alan Esler. Both trees are attractive and healthy, though the Manukau Road tree harboured considerable numbers of the Chinese wax scale, *Ceroplastes sinensis*. Wilga could be a useful street tree in Auckland, and presumably would be even more at home in drier regions of the country such as Hawkes Bay.

