

have the "h", and that is the form Linnaeus used when he published the name.

6. *Hedygium gardnerianum*, kahili ginger:

The common name of this ginger is sometimes begun with a capital K, as if referring to a region of the Himalayas where the plant might be native. In fact, "kahili" is a Polynesian word, from the Hawaiian Islands, for a kind of royal ceremonial feather-plume, often red and yellow (for ornithological details see Amante-Helweg & Conant 2009: 62) and therefore, very appropriate for the *H. gardnerianum* inflorescence. Perhaps the name first appeared in the Hawaiian gardening literature.

7. *Excoecaria agallocha*: Innocent visitors to Norfolk Island are regularly cautioned about this sinister coastal tree, its milky sap so poisonous as to be able to blind. The spelling of the genus-name should then be *Excaecaria*, from Latin *excaecare* to blind; as presently spelt (the original spelling of Linnaeus) it makes no sense. There is no provision in the current Botanical Code of Nomenclature though that would allow a correction to be made.

8. *Tmesipteris horomaka*: The nuisance of unlatinized Maori place-names as epithets continues, no attention being paid to the Recommendation of

the current Botanical Code that geographical epithets should take the usual endings (*-ensis*, etc), nor to its Principle V, that "Scientific names of taxonomic groups are treated as Latin regardless of their derivation", nor to Preamble 13, that "in the absence of a relevant rule established custom is [to be] followed". See the twelve thousand correctly formed geographical epithets in Kunkel (1990).

A band of critics pointed out that I was wrong (Gardner 1998) in saying that the malformed geographical species-names I listed (*Cotula maniototo*, etc) were in need of orthographic correction, since there is no provision in the Code for doing so. If there had been a relevant Rule I would have cited it, and changed the names myself. It may be useless pointing this out to those who cannot begin from the beginning, that is, in the spirit of the law.

¹ A grasp of Latin basics is needed, though; machine-translation of Latin can make more problems than it solves. For example, if 16th C. Italian botanist Castore Durante were to be resurrected, he would be puzzled at finding himself now addressed as "Beavers During".

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Coprosma (Rubiaceae) in the Cook Islands

Rhys Gardner

Coprosma laevigata

The only true *Coprosma* in this tropical Polynesian archipelago is *Coprosma laevigata* of Rarotonga (Fig. 1), one of the discoveries made by Thomas Cheeseman on his 1899 visit there (Cheeseman 1903). Its rather thin and glossy leaves, whose finer venation reaches more or less to the midrib, and its "small bushy tree" habit, give it a fair resemblance to *C. acutifolia* of the Kermadecs and *C. macrocarpa* of New Zealand.

Coprosma laevigata does not seem to have anything that might indicate a close relationship with *C. robusta* (e.g., it does not have this species' minutely serrate leaf margins). Nor is there anything unusual about its domatia, which are simply small dome-roofed pits. Its stipules are like those of *C. repens*: relatively broad and thick, they carry numerous large glandular denticles along their margin, and they erode in place. This contrasts



Fig. 1. *Coprosma laevigata* (a – d & f from AK 271124; e from AK 150657 (Rarotonga)).
a Shoot, with female flowers and fruit (x1.4).
b Enlargement of lower surface of leaf at midrib showing reticulate venation and a dome-roofed pit domatium (*dom*) (x15), with t.s. of domatium (x50)
c Stipule (x10)
d Female flower (x10), with enlargement of plumose stigma (x40).
e Male flower (x10) with 2 of the 4 stamens removed.
f Fruit (x7)



Fig. 2. *Kadua romanzoffiense* (a – e drawn from AK 43808, Christmas I. (Kiribati). f drawn from <http://www.herbier-tahiti.pf> Photo: J. F. Butaud)

a Shoot with flowers, immature fruit and old fruit (x1).

b Young stem with stipules and leaf bases (x40).

c Pair of detached leaves held together by their stipules (c. x1.5).

d Fruit capsule in l.s., most seeds already shed, the lignified endocarp shown hatched (x7).

e Seeds (black, finely papillose, faceted/rounded) (x25).

f Shoot bearing flowers and fruit (x2).

especially with the thin acute stipules of *C. acutifolia* and *C. macrocarpa*, which quickly dry off and fall cleanly from the node.

Unlike the two Samoan coprosmas (Gardner 2013), *C. laevigata* is not a plant of the wet "cloud forest" summits, but rather, is most plentiful at middle altitude (c. 250–300 m), on ridge crests that can get quite dry between July and September (e.g., notes on AK 150657, 271124).

In being able to survive times of drought the similarity of *C. laevigata* to *C. acutifolia* and *C. macrocarpa*, rather than to *C. robusta*, makes sense; likewise the suggestion by Oliver (1935) that the two coprosmas of a pair of relatively dry islands in eastern Polynesia, Rapa I. and Pitcairn I., might be very closely related to *C. laevigata*.

Hedyotis (Kadua) romanzoffiensis

A second "coprosma" occurs in the Cook Islands, not on Rarotonga but on several of the atolls in both the Northern and Southern island groups. It was described by Oliver (1935: 142) as *Coprosma*

oceanica, the type specimen coming from an atoll in the Tuamotu Is. in French Polynesia. Its succulent fruit seemed right for *Coprosma*, but its numerous, angular, papillose seeds, and the terminal position of the inflorescence (Fig. 2), soon meant it was recognized as a member of a different tribe in the Rubiaceae, the Hedyotidae. Today it is put into the big Old World genus *Hedyotis*, or into a Pacific segregate of this, *Kadua* (Terrell et al. 2005).

Regardless of generic, the plant now rejoices in the epithet "*romanzoffiensis*", having been discovered and named by an early 19th C. Russian scientific voyage into the Pacific — this was on an atoll they called Romanzoff Island, in what are now the Marshall Islands. It is found in the scrubby beach vegetation of coral atolls: the Marshall Is., Tuvalu, Kiribati and Tokelau in the west, the Cook Islands, and French Polynesia (including Pitcairn Is. but not the Societies or the Marquesas) in the east. Why it is not known from intervening low islands, for example those of Fiji, is yet another question for Pacific biogeographers.

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Notes on the wind grass, *Lachnagrostis filiformis* (Poaceae)

Rhys Gardner

As a native grass but a rather weedy one (and unusually for our flora, an annual), wind grass is still quite common in the Auckland region, in regularly disturbed sites like the edges of sand-dune lakes and estuaries. It has now spread into man-made (and sometimes quite dry) habitats too, such as railway corridors, industrial hard-stand areas, and the yards of budget car-dealers; see Appendix for more detail.

This article notes the salient points in the history of our knowledge of *Lachnagrostis filiformis*. The illustration (Fig. 1) is from Hitchcock (1922). Anyone looking for images on the Web should be aware that *L. filiformis* will often appear under the alternative legitimate name *Agrostis avenacea*.

The older literature

Banks and Solander discovered wind grass in New Zealand, but it only entered the public domain after the second of Cook's voyages, when the Forsters collected it in New Zealand and Easter Island, and described it as a new species, *Avena filiformis*. Over the next few decades though, it would usually have been thought of as a species of *Agrostis*, the big "rag bag" genus of 1-flowered grasses. Then, in 1820, the German botanist C. B. von Trinius (1778–1844) published a masterly survey of grass morphology and taxonomy and there the plant acquired a new genus-name, *Lachnagrostis*. Together with *L. filiformis* were *L. billardiarei*, the sand wind-grass, which like *L. filiformis* is native to Australia and New Zealand, and *L. aemula*, a purely Australian species (Trinius 1820).