

EUPHORBIA VACHELLII HOOK. & ARN. REPLACING
E. SERRULATA REINW. EX BL. (EUPHORBIACEAE)

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Recently my attention was drawn by a note of Fosberg who pointed out that the name *Euphorbia serrulata* Reinw. ex Bl. 1826 is antedated by *E. serrulata* Thuill. 1790 and that because of this homonymy Steudel had given a new name for the Indo-Malesian *E. serrulata*, viz. *E. reinwardtiana* Steud. 1841.

However, Boissier in DC. Prod. 15, 2 (1862) 25 mentioned as a synonym *E. vachellii* Hook. & Arn., Bot. Capt. Beech. Voy. (1837) 213 as a synonym and also Index Kewensis refers this name to *E. serrulata*.

E. vachellii was described on a specimen from Macao, which is at Kew (*Vachell* 241).

Mr. Alan Smith of Kew has been so kind to check this synonymy, and he and Mr. Airy Shaw find it doubtless conspecific (Shaw in litt.).

The consequence is that this must be the correct name for the species.

"This conclusion was earlier reached by Hurusawa (J. Fac. Sc. Univ. Tokyo III, 6, 1954, 283) and accepted by Keng (Taiwania 6, 1955, 45) who, following Merrill, 1923, included also *Euphorbia parannaquensis* Blanco, 1837."

It is widely distributed, and at Kew are specimens from the Ryu Kyu Is, Taiwan, Hainan, S. China (Kwangsi), Indo-China, and Thailand; furthermore it occurs throughout Malesia, the Malay Peninsula and Borneo excepted, and in

northern Australia. In Java it is found only in the extreme eastern part.

It may well turn up in Burma and in eastern India.

It is a grassfield-dwelling species, with a preference for seasonal drought.

The species is rather variable as to size and leaf-index, from almost linear to elliptic. In East Java, the Lesser Sunda Islands, and New Guinea there occur distinctly pubescent specimens.

Leaf-index, size and pubescence vary in degree, with all intermediates; especially in the areas subject to seasonal drought burnt stocks may produce such shoots from this perennial species.

A more or less extreme pubescent paramorph from East Java which I had identified in 1932 as *E. serrulata* Reinw. f. *pubescens* (in sched.) was however later described as *E. backeri* P. & H. (*Backer* 7762).

Mr. J. F. Veldkamp has at my suggestion examined a whole range of specimens, but has failed to find any structural difference between the genuine form and the pubescent broad-leaved paramorphs, in the shape of the cyathial glands, the fruit, and the seed, from which organs specific differences must emanate in this genus. As I expected, none can be found and I have therefore definitely reduced *E. backeri* P. & H. to *E. vachellii* which has, therefore, now four synonyms.