

New combination for *Uncinia flaccida* in *Carex* (Cyperaceae)

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Abstract

A new combination in *Carex* is made for *Uncinia flaccida* S.T.Blake since the earlier '*Carex flaccida*', usually attributed to Sw. ex Wahlenb., is invalid, published only in synonymy by several authors.

Introduction

A paper outlining the case for a broad circumscription of the genus *Carex* L. (Global Carex Group 2015) included combinations in *Carex* for species previously included in the genus *Uncinia* Pers. In that paper, I created a new name – *Carex austroflaccida* K.L.Wilson – for the Australian species *Uncinia flaccida* S.T.Blake, thinking that the epithet '*flaccida*' was preoccupied in *Carex* as either '*Carex flaccida* Sw. ex Wahlenb.' (1803) or '*C. flaccida* Sw. ex Kunth' (1837).

However, further investigation has shown that Swartz, Wahlenberg and Kunth did not validly publish the name. I could find no reference to such a name in the original treatment of *Carex* in volume one of the *Flora Indiae occidentalis* (Swartz 1797: 84) nor in the additions and corrections in the following volumes: neither the section 'Addenda' on several unnumbered pages at the start of volume 2 (Swartz 1798) nor the sections 'Omissa et addenda' (pp. 1941–1964) and 'Inserenda et corrigenda' (pp. 1965–1988) in the third volume (Swartz 1806). The first publication of the (invalid) name seems to have been as a synonym under *C. cladostachya* Wahlenb. (= *C. polystachya* Sw. ex Wahlenb. fide Acevedo-Rodrigues and Strong 8 July 2005) by Wahlenberg (1803: 149), in the form '*C. flaccida* Swartz [sic] Flor. ind. occid. Append.' It is not clear what appendix of Swartz's publication (Swartz 1797, 1806) was being referred to by Wahlenberg (1803). There is no appendix to that work, nor do Stafleu & Cowan (1986) mention one.

Stearn (1980) supplied a possible reason why Swartz (1806) omitted this taxon (under either name): Swartz apparently concentrated on publishing species new to science, i.e., he was not intending to provide a complete Flora for Jamaica, and on that basis he would have omitted this species because he knew that Wahlenberg (1803) had already published its name and description.

Most of Swartz's herbarium is in S (Nordenstam 2012). One of the isotypes of *C. cladostachya* in S (sheet S-R-913, image seen) bears a draft description of *C. flaccida* written by Swartz, headed by '*Carex flaccida* (fl. ind. occid.)' and annotated above that (in the same hand) '*Carex cladostachya* Wahlenb.' This can be interpreted as meaning that Swartz had intended to describe this taxon in his *Flora Indiae occidentalis* volume 3 (1806) but realised that he had been beaten to the punch by Wahlenberg (1803). An isotype of *C. polystachya* (sheet S-R-925) bears a typed note about the missing appendix manuscript, stating that only a few pages exist (as copies, and annotated by Wikström) attached to some herbarium sheets, e.g. sheet S-R-913.

The later publication by Kunth (1837: 510) merely cited the name as a synonym of *C. cladostachya*, as Wahlenberg had done, making it a nomen nudum.

Numerous other authors including Willdenow (1805: 247), Schkuhr (1808: 182), Poiret (1813: 284), Dietrich (1816: 30), Steudel (1821: 155, 1841: 285, 287) and Clarke (1900: 158) repeated the citation of Swartz's invalid name as a synonym of *C. cladostachya*. Kuekenthal (1909: 267) also cited it as a synonym, with the note '(ex Wahlenb.)'. Boott (1858: 29) and Grisebach (1859–64: 580) did not mention it, nor do more recent West Indian Floras, including Adams (1972:156), Koyama (1979: 320) and Acevedo-Rodríguez and Strong (2005: 250).

Since Swartz's invalid name is a nomen nudum, published only as a synonym, there is no barrier to making a new combination in *Carex* for *Uncinia flaccida*:

Carex flaccida (S.T.Blake) K.L.Wilson, *comb. nov.*

Basionym: *Uncinia flaccida* S.T.Blake, *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Queensland* 51: 49 (1940).

Carex austroflaccida K.L.Wilson in Global Carex Group, *Bot. J. Linn. Soc.* 179: 29 (2015), *nom. superfl.*

Type citation: 'Victoria. – Mount Buffalo, in rock crevices, ca. 5,000 feet, Jan. 26th, 1935, Blake 7398 (Type in Bri.)'

Type: Australia: Victoria: Mount Buffalo, c. 5,000 feet [1,500 m], S.T. Blake 7398, 26 Jan 1935; holo BRI-AQ0341575; iso CANB 260671, K 000960285, L 0042816, MEL 67107, MEL 67112, MEL 2084383, MEL 2380193, NSW 43165, P 00605672, P 00605673.

Distribution: At higher altitudes in south-eastern New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania (Wilson 1993).

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