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## TYPIFICATION AND NOMENCLATURE OF TWO SPECIES OF SANSEVIERIA (AGAVACEAE)

D. O. Wijñands\*

### Summary

The correct name for the species commonly known as *Sansevieria thyrsoiflora* Thunb. or *Sansevieria guineensis* (L.) Willd is *Sansevieria hyacinthoides* (L.) Druce, typified by C. Commelin, *Praeludia Botanica* 84. t. 33. 1703. *Sansevieria zeylanica* (L.) Willd. is a correct name.

*Aloe hyacinthoides* L. (Sp. Pl. 1753: 321) contains two infraspecific taxa, at present recognised as two species, one from Ceylon, the other from South Africa. The confusion concerning the typification and, hence, the nomenclature of these species appears to be the result of an error in Linnaeus's protologue. The two taxa described are:  $\alpha$  *zeylanica*, typified by C. Commelin (*Hort. Med. Amstel. Rar. Pl.* 2: 41. t. 21. 1701) and  $\beta$  *guineensis*, typified by C. Commelin (*Hort. Med. Amstelod. Rar. Pl.* 2: 39. t. 20. 1701<sup>1</sup> and *Praelud. Bot.* 84. t. 33. 1703<sup>2</sup>).

Linnaeus states to have seen no flowers of  $\beta$  ("Plantae  $\beta$  flores non vidi"), but the description refers entirely to the flowers. From this Stearn (1961) concluded that  $\alpha$  *zeylanica* is the type of the species so that the correct name for the Ceylon species would be *Sansevieria hyacinthoides* (L.) Druce. In my opinion, however, " $\alpha$ " should be read for " $\beta$ " in the quoted clause, for two reasons: (1) Commelin's plates are the only elements in the protologue and the description refers entirely to the flowers, hence the iconotype of the species must show flowers. However, the plate referred to under  $\alpha$  *zeylanica* figures a sterile plant. The plant on the first plate, cited under  $\beta$  *guineensis*, is sterile too, but the second illustration, which represents the same plant a few years later, does show flowers. Linnaeus's description matches this plate very well. It is noteworthy in this respect that N. E. Brown (1915) stated that he had seen no flowers of *S. zeylanica* and that Jacobsen (1970) gives no description of the flowers of this species either. It is clear that Linnaeus' description is based on *Praelud. Bot.* 84 t. 33 1703. (2) In the *Hortus Clifortianus* 132. 1737 the situation is quite unambiguous. Here the collective species is named *Aloe foliis lanceolatis planis erectis radicatis*. There are two varieties again:  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ , corresponding with  $\beta$  *guineensis* and  $\alpha$  *zeylanica* of Sp. Pl. 321. 1757, respectively, so that in this context the clause "Plantae  $\beta$  flores non vidi" would be correct and make sense.

Manifestly  $\beta$  *guineensis* is the type of the Linnaean species, so that the correct name for the South African species is *Sansevieria hyacinthoides* (L.) Druce. The fact that this combination was intended by Druce to relate to the Ceylon species and was advocated as such by Stearn (1961), is

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1. And not 39. t. 26 as cited by Linnaeus.

2. And not 84. t. 23 as cited by Linnaeus.

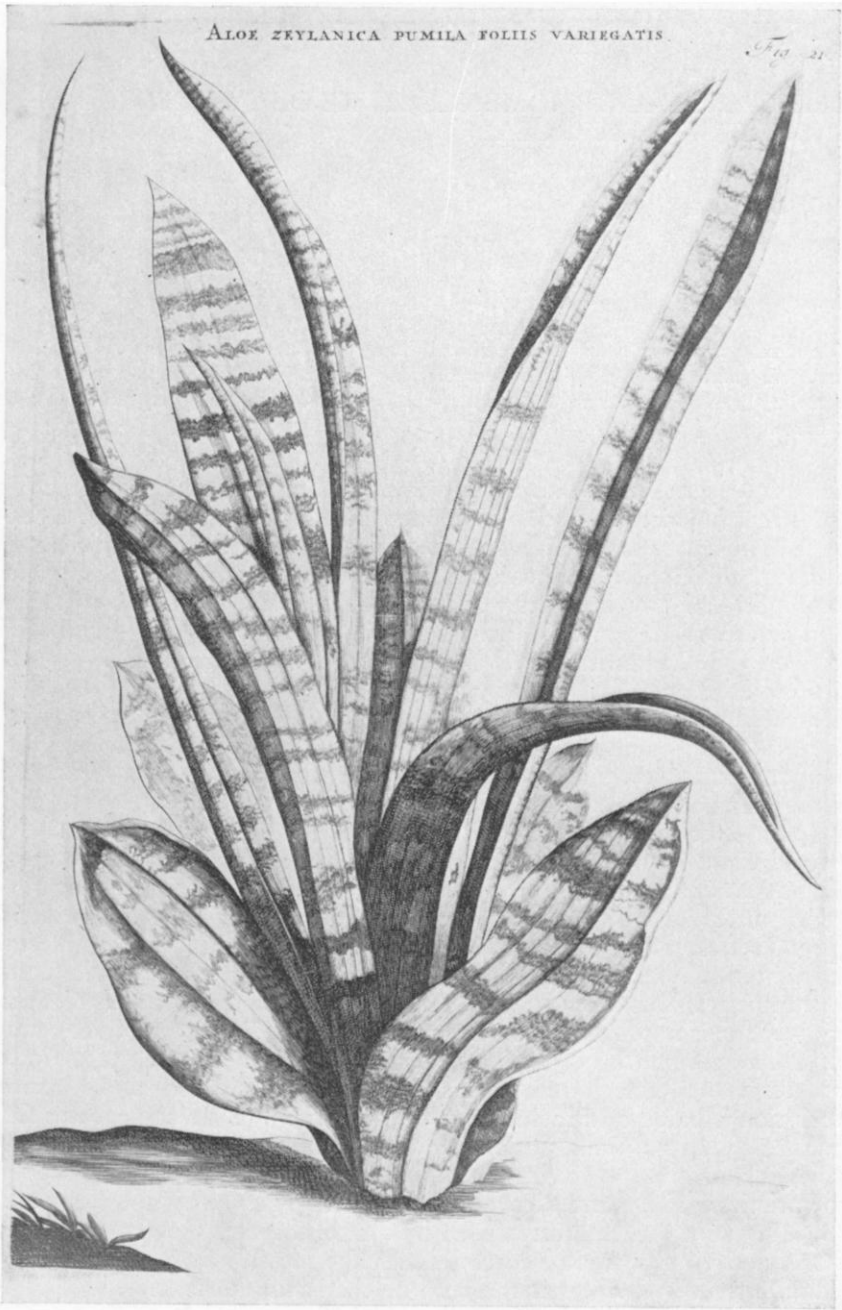


Fig. 1. Illustration of *Sansevieria zeylanica* (L.) Willd. in Caspar Commelin, *Hort. Med. Amstelod. Rar. Pl. 2: t. 21* (1701).



Fig. 2 Illustration of *Sansevieria hyacinthoides* (L.) Druce in Caspar Commelin, *Hort. Med. Amstelod. Rar. Pl. 2: t. 20* (1701).



Fig. 3. Illustrations of *Sansevieria hyacinthoides* (L.) Druce in Caspar Commelin, *Prae-ludia Botanica*: t. 33 (1703).

nomenclaturally no obstacle to this conclusion. Article 55 of the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature regulates this situation. The Ceylon species presents no nomenclatural difficulty, as it was transferred to *Sansevieria* by Willdenow (1799) as *Sansevieria zeylanica* (L.) Willd.

The conserved type of *Sansevieria* Thunb. is cited as *S. guineensis* (L.) Willd. in the list of nomina generica conservanda and a correction is therefore necessary:

(349) Proposal to amend the entry of 1110 *Sansevieria* in the list of Nomina generica conservanda.

In the light of the evidence, it is proposed that the type species should be cited as *S. hyacinthoides* (L.) Druce.

12. ALOE foliis lanceolatis planis erectis radicatis.  
 α Aloe guineensis, radice geniculata, foliis e viridi & atro undulatum variegatis. *Comm. hort.* 2. p. 39. t. 20. *præl.* 84. t. 33. *Boerb. lugdb.* 2. p. 131. n. 41.  
 Anonymos guineensis, aloës foliis geniculatis e viridi & atro undulatum variegatis, floribus rubicundis apocyni (fl. hlii convallium) dodartii fimillimis. *Kigg. beaum.* 8.  
 β Aloe zeylanica pumila, foliis variegatis. *Comm. hort.* 2. p. 41. *Pluk. alm.* 19. t. 256. f. 5. *Boerb. lugdb.* 1. p. 131. n. 42.  
 Aloë pumila serpentina zeylanica. *Breyn. prod.* 2. p. 12.  
*Crescit in Guinea & Zeylona.*  
*Scapus erectus, vix folia superans, flores undique erecto-patuli, tubo angusto, limbo revolutis; Folia zonis transversis variegata.*  
 Obf. *Varietas α folia fere solitaria & exacte lanceolata ac erecta & plana promit; at β folia conferta ensiformia, præsertim interiora, marginibus involutis, reclinata, longissima.*

Fig. 4. Text concerning *Aloe foliis lanceolatis planis erectis radicatis* in Linnaeus, *Hortus Cliffortianus*: 132 (1737).

Mr W. Marais of Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, will deal with the question of the citation of *Sansevieria* in a separate proposal.

The synonymy of the species is as follows:

[As to the typification of *S. guineensis* (L.) Willd. and its implications I follow Brenan (1963).]

- SANSEVIERIA HYACINTHOIDES (L.) Druce<sup>3</sup>, *Rep. Bot. Exch. Cl. Brit. Isles* 1913 3: 423. 1914. T.: *Aloe guineensis, radice geniculata, foliis e viridi & atro undulatum variegatis* C. Commelin, *Praelud. Bot.* 84. t. 33. 1703.  
*Aloe hyacinthoides* L. β *guineensis* L. *Sp. Pl.* 321. 1753.  
*Aloe guineensis* (L.) N. J. Jacq. *Enum. Stirp. Vindobon.* 308. 1762, pro parte, nom. illegit.  
*Alettris hyacinthoides* (L.) L. β *guineensis* (L.) L. *Sp. Pl. ed.* 2. 456. 1762.  
*Alettris guineensis* (L.) N. J. Jacq. *Pl. Hort. Vindobon.* 1: 36. t. 84. 1770, pro parte, nom. illegit.  
*Sanseverinia thyrsiflora* Petagna, *Instit. Bot.* 3: 643. 1787, nom. illegit.  
*Salmia spicata* Cav. *Icon. Pl. Hisp.* 3: 24. t. 246. 1795.

4. ALOE floribus sessilibus horizontalibus infundibuliformibus æqualibus limbo *hyacinthoides.* *revolutis.*  
 Aloe foliis lanceolatis planis rectis radicatis: *Hort. cliff.* 32. *Hort. ups.* 85. *Fl. zeyl.* 130. *Roy. lugdb.* 24.  
 α. Aloe zeylanica pumila, foliis variegatis. *Comm. hort. zeylanica.* 2. p. 41. t. 21. *Pluk. alm.* 19. t. 256. f. 5.  
 β. Aloe guineensis, radice geniculata, foliis e viridi & a- guineensis. *tro undulatum variegatis. Comm. hort. 2. p. 39. t. 26 præl. 84. t. 23.*  
*Habitat α in Zeylona, β. in Guinea. 2*  
 Plaata: β flores non vidi, dubiam emendent vel confirmant autoptæ.

Fig. 5. Text concerning *Aloe hyacinthoides* L. in Linnaeus, *Species Plantarum*: 321-322 (1753). Note the interchange of 'α' and 'β' in the texts of *Hortus Cliffortianus* and of *Species Plantarum*.

3. The spelling 'Sansevieria' was used by Druce.

*Sansevieria guineensis* (L.) Willd. Sp. Pl. 2: 159. 1799, nom. illegit.

*Sansevieria spicata* (Cav.) Haw. Syn. Pl. Succ. 66. 1812.

*Sansevieria latifolia* Bojer, Hort. Maurit. 348. 1837.

*SANSEVIERIA ZEYLANICA* (L.) Willd. Sp. Pl. 2: 159. 1799.

T.: *Aloe zeylanica pumila, foliis variegatis* C. Commelin, Hort. Med. Amstelod. Rar. Pl. 2: 41. t. 21. 1701.

*Aloe hyacinthoides* L. *a zeylanica* L. Sp. Pl. 321. 1753.

*Aloe zeylanica* (L.) N. J. Jacq. Enum. Stirp. Vindobon. 310. 1762.

*Aletris hyacinthoides* (L.) L. *a zeylanica* (L.) L. Sp. Pl. ed. 2. 456. 1762.

*Aletris zeylanica* (L.) Miller, Gard. Dict. ed. 8. 1768.

*Sansevieria indica* Herter, Estud. Bot. Reg. Urug. 24: 218. 1956, nom. illegit.

### *Acknowledgement*

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