Re-evaluating the Upper Guinean species of Triclisia (Menispermaceae)

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Re-evaluating the Upper Guinean species of *Triclisia* (*Menispermaceae*)

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**Abstract:** In Upper Guinea in Africa three species of *Triclisia* Benth. (*Menispermaceae*) are recognized: *T. dictyophylla* Diels, *T. patens* Oliv. and *T. subcordata* Oliv. *Triclisia dictyophylla* and *T. subcordata*, as delimited in the revision of this genus by Troupin (1962), each include more than one distinct species. On the basis of a comparative morphological analysis, *T. dictyophylla* is split here into *T. dictyophylla* s.s. and *T. gilletii* (De Wild.) Staner and *T. subcordata* is split into *T. angolensis* Exell, *T. hypochrysea* Diels and *T. subcordata* s.s. No new names have to be published. Illustrations are provided along with distribution maps.

**Key words:** Africa, *Menispermaceae*, taxonomy, *Triclisia*, tropical forest, Upper Guinea

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## Introduction

*Triclisia* Benth. is a genus of *Menispermaceae* with c. 16 liana species endemic to Africa including Madagascar; all species are dioecious. In Upper Guinea (sensu White 1979), three species are recognized: *T. dictyophylla* Diels, *T. patens* Oliv. and *T. subcordata* Oliv. (Hawthorne & Jongkind 2006). Only *T. patens* is endemic to Upper Guinea. In Upper Guinea the male flowers and fruits of *T. dictyophylla*, *T. patens* and *T. subcordata* are clearly different from each other. *Triclisia dictyophylla* has male flowers with six stamens (Fig. 1A–E) and almost glabrous fruit carpels of 3–4.5 × 2.5–3.5 cm, while *T. patens* has male flowers with only three stamens (Fig. 1H–M, Fig. 2) and pubescent fruits 1–2 cm in diameter. The third species, *T. subcordata*, has male flowers with six stamens (Fig. 3) and is smaller than the other two in habit, leaf, inflorescence, flower and fruit (Table 1).

Part of the herbarium specimens from outside Upper Guinea, included in *Triclisia dictyophylla* and *T. subcordata* in the last revision of the African *Menispermaceae* (Troupin 1962), have flower and fruit characters that are clearly different from those in Upper Guinea. Because of that, these two species are re-evaluated here. Three species, *T. angolensis* Exell, *T. gilletii* (De Wild.) Staner and *T. hypochrysea* Diels, which were earlier made synonym by Troupin, are resurrected here as a result.

This paper is a first step to a new revision of *Triclisia* for continental Africa. More problems have to be solved before a complete revision can be published. Several more *Triclisia* species, in the way they are used by Troupin (1962) in his revision of the *Menispermaceae* for Africa, are clearly a mixture. Solving the complete *Tri-

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Table 1. Summary of diagnostic characters for the species of *Triclisia* treated here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th><em>dictyophylla</em></th>
<th><em>gillettii</em></th>
<th><em>patens</em></th>
<th><em>angolensis</em></th>
<th><em>hypochrysea</em></th>
<th><em>subcordata</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaf blade size</td>
<td>to 36 cm wide</td>
<td>to 32 × 27 cm</td>
<td>10–18 ×</td>
<td>7–9.5 ×</td>
<td>7–9 ×</td>
<td>5–11 ×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petiole length</td>
<td>5–20 cm</td>
<td>5–22 cm</td>
<td>5–12 cm</td>
<td>3–4 cm</td>
<td>2.5–3 cm</td>
<td>1.6–3.2 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male flower</td>
<td>3–4 mm</td>
<td>c. 6 mm</td>
<td>c. 3 mm</td>
<td>c. 7 mm</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>3–4 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>innermost sepal length</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stamens number</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stamens length</td>
<td>c. 2 mm</td>
<td>4–5 mm</td>
<td>2–2.5 mm</td>
<td>c. 4 mm</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2.5–3 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit carpel size</td>
<td>3–4.5 × 2.5–3.5 cm</td>
<td>2–2.5 × c. 2 cm (excluding beak)</td>
<td>1.5–2 cm in diam.</td>
<td>c. 1 cm in diam.</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1–1.5 cm in diam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit carpel</td>
<td>glabrous</td>
<td>hairy</td>
<td>hairy</td>
<td>hairy</td>
<td>hairy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indumentum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Triclisia* puzzle is hampered by several accepted names that are only represented by incomplete collections.

**Material and methods**

The morphological characters of all continental African *Triclisia* species in the BM, BR, K, P and W AG herbaria were studied and the three Upper Guinean species were also studied in the field. The herbaria are indicated by the international code registered in Index Herbariorum (Thiers 2017+). The African Plant Database (2015+) was checked for more information on the species and the genus. The distribution maps are based only on herbarium specimens.

**Results**

When specimens of *Triclisia dictyophylla* from all over its distribution area are compared, conspicuous differences in the shape and size of flowers and fruit carpels can be seen. The exceptional large, for *Triclisia*, fruit carpels from the specimens west of Cameroon were already described by Keay & Troupin (1954: 71, as *T. gilletii*). In publications on Central Africa the fruit carpels of the same species were described by Troupin (1951: 216, fig. 17; 1962: 91) as being about half that size and ending in a conspicuously beaked. This beak was also mentioned by Exell (1935: 8) for *T. flavia* Exell, here a synonym of *T. gilletii*.

Another name presented by Troupin as synonym of *Triclisia dictyophylla*, *T. trichantha* Diels from Cameroon, cannot be placed yet with certainty; it might not be a *Triclisia* species.

In the *Flora of West Tropical Africa* (Keay & Troupin 1954: 72), *Triclisia subcordata* was still restricted to Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria, but was later united by Troupin with *T. angolensis* Exell from Angola and *T. hypochrysea* Diels from Gabon (Troupin 1962: 86). This lumping does not seem correct because the flowers and fruits from *T. subcordata* s.s. and *T. angolensis* are clearly different. The type and only known specimen of *T. hypochrysea*, the third species included by Troupin in *T. subcordata*, is sterile.

*Triclisia angolensis* and *T. subcordata* s.s. (Table 1) are in fact distinct species. The innermost sepals in the male flower of *T. angolensis* are more than twice as long as wide (Exell 1926: 13), while these sepals in *T. subcordata* s.s. (Fig. 3C–G) are almost equal in length and width (Keay & Troupin 1954: 71). The fruit carpel and endocarp of *T. subcordata* s.s. are also conspicuously different from those of *T. angolensis* and from all other species in the genus. To show this, these fruit characters are illustrated here for five different *Triclisia* species, including four *T. subcordata* s.s. examples from different countries (Fig. 4). The shape of the fruit carpel and endocarp of *T. angolensis* is more or less equal to that of most other species of the genus, with the style relatively close to the stipe (Fig. 4A1–3). The orientation of the endocarp in the fruit carpel of *T. subcordata* s.s. is different from that in all the other *Triclisia* species, resulting in a style that is situated almost opposite to the stipe (Fig. 4B–E, Fig. 7).

There is a large geographical gap between *Triclisia angolensis* and *T. subcordata* s.s. The type and only specimen of *T. hypochrysea*, the third species included by Troupin, was collected in between the areas of these other two species (Fig. 10). This type specimen is sterile and the leaf shape and indumentum do not link it
Fig. 2. *Triclisia patens* – A, B: stem of big liana with cauliflorous male flowers (stamens alternating with inner sepals). – Liberia, 2010, Jongkind & al. 9461, photographed by Carel Jongkind.

Fig. 3. *Triclisia subcordata* – A: flowering branch; B: inflorescence; C: flower; D–G: sepals; H: petal; I: stamen; J: petals and androecium; K: petal and stamen. – Source: Togo, Warnecke 327 (B). – Previously published in *Das Pflanzenreich* (Diels 1910: 72).
Fig. 4. *Triclisia* fruit carpel and endocarp details: 1: dry fruit carpel; 2: endocarp, lateral view; 3: endocarp, from below. – A: *T. angolensis*, also showing branch with leaves and fruit. – B–E: *T. subcordata*. – F, G: *T. patens*. – H: *T. lanceolata* Troupin. – I: *T. riparia* Troupin. – Source: A: Angola, Gossweiler 8435 (BM); B: Nigeria, Geerling 4194 (WAG); C: Benin, Akoègninou & Bada 3038 (WAG); D: Togo, Breteler 7199 (WAG); E: Ivory Coast, J. J. de Wilde 263 (WAG); F: Liberia, Jongkind 5401 (WAG); G: Liberia, Jongkind 6070 (WAG); H: Congo Kinshasa, Compère 1239 (BR); I: Congo Kinshasa, Evrard 679 (BR). – All drawn by Hans de Vries, April 2017.
Fig. 5. *Triclisia dictyophylla*, fruit carpels. – A: Liberia, 2005, Jongkind & al. 6450; B: Guinea, 2012, Jongkind & Bilivogui 11470; both photographed by Carel Jongkind.

Fig. 6. *Triclisia gilletii* – A: branches with fruits; B: fruit carpels showing characteristic beak. – A, B: Congo Kinshasa, 2011, X. van der Burgt 1510, photographed by Xander van der Burgt.
to T. angolensis or to T. subcordata, making it hard to place this species. In the protologue, Diels keyed out T. hypochrysea using the characters of the flowers (Diels 1910: 69, 71), which is surprising because in the same publication he wrote that his type and only specimen is sterile. Mildbraed 8726 from Cameroon, a specimen with flower buds also cited by Troupin under T. subcordata, might belong to T. hypochrysea. Looking at indumentum and leaf shape, there could also be a connection with T. lucida Exell & Mendonça from Angola.

After separating Triclisia subcordata, T. angolensis and T. hypochrysea, T. subcordata is here restricted to West Africa again, it is found from Ivory Coast to Nigeria (Fig. 10). There it is found only in drier forest types such as semi-deciduous forest (Hall & Swaine 1981: 310). Triclisia angolensis is again endemic to the north of Angola. Only a few herbarium specimens of T. angolensis exist but, according to Exell (1926: 13), it was not uncommon early last century in rocky situations around Cazengo in the north of Angola.

The distribution of none of the three species from Upper Guinea goes all the way to E Africa. In the Flora of Tropical East Africa, Troupin (1956: 5–7) recognized three species of Triclisia for East Africa: T. sacleuxii (Pierre) Diels, T. sp. A (based on Faulkner 769) and T. sp. B (based on Loveridge 244). Faulkner 769 (T. sp. A) became the type of Anisocyclea blepharosepala subsp. tanzaniensis Vollesen (Vollesen 1981). Loveridge 244 (T. sp. B) in the Kew herbarium is in the present study identified as Syrrheonema fasciculatum Miers. This means that T. sacleuxii is the only species of Triclisia that is found in East Africa.

No new names have to be published here, all species have already published names. The number and names of the species in Upper Guinea stays the same: Triclisia dictyophylla, T. patens and T. subcordata.

List of species with synonyms, types and vouchers

**Triclisia angolensis** Exell in J. Bot. 64 (Suppl. 1): 12. 1926. – Holotype: Angola, Cuanza Norte, Cazengo, Granja de S. Luis, fl., Nov 1909, Gossweiler 4892 (BM; isotypes: COI, K, LISC). – Table 1, Fig. 4A, Fig. 10.

Additional specimens seen — ANGOLA: Cuanza Norte, proximum flumen Zenza, fr., 20 Oct 1922, Gossweiler 8435 (BM); Cuanza Norte, Cazengo, Granja de S. Luis, fl., Gossweiler 10356 (BM).

**Triclisia dictyophylla** Diels in Engler, Pflanzenreich IV. 94 (Heft 46): 70. 1910. – Holotype: Angola, Bembe, fl., Apr 1873, J. J. Monteiro s.n. (K). – Table 1, Fig. 1A–E, Fig. 5, Fig. 8.
Additional specimens seen —


Buco Zau, fl., fr., 24 Oct 1916, *go Munga, fr., Feb 1916, 1922, Vanderyst 12219* (BR). – Table 1, Fig. 10.


**Triclisia patens** Oliv., Fl. Trop. Afr. 1: 49. 1868. – Holotype: Sierra Leone, Bagroo River, fl., Apr 1861, *Triclisia patens* Oliv., Fl. Trop. Afr. 1: 49. 1868. – *Dinklage 592* (B). – Table 1, Fig. 10.

Known only from the sterile type specimen.


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References


