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HYPOLYTRUM UNISPICATUM (CYPERACEAE), A NEW SPECIES FROM CAMEROON

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SUMMARY

A new species of *Hypolytrum* (Cyperaceae), *H. unispicatum* Sosef & D.A. Simpson, from southern Cameroon is described and illustrated. Some remarks on its ecology and related species are given.

Key words: Cyperaceae, *Hypolytrum*, Africa, Cameroon, taxonomy.

In 2003 material of Cyperaceae, collected independently by two persons at the same locality in southern Cameroon, was brought to the attention of the first author. He suspected it to represent a new species of *Hypolytrum* or *Mapania* and contacted the second author. The latter confirmed it was a new species of *Hypolytrum*, a genus which is currently under revision (Alves & Simpson, in prep.) and in which two other new species from Cameroon were recently discovered (Simpson et al., 2004; Lye & Simpson, in press).

Hypolytrum unispicatum Sosef & D.A. Simpson, *spec. nov.* — Fig. 1

> *Hypolytrum secans* (K. Schum.) J. Raynal, affinis sed culmis numerosis setaceis vel filiformis unispicis, bractea involucrata infima glumacea differt. — Typus: *P. Tchouto, Nnangah & Elemva 3463* (holo WAG; iso K, YA), Cameroon, South Province, Campo Ma'an area, Bidou, Mont d'Elephant, Lat. 2° 47' 52" N, Long. 10° 01' 04" E, 6 December 2002.

Moderately robust, rhizomatous perennial; rhizome short, 5–8 mm diam., with fibrous remains of old sheaths. *Cataphylls* all at the base of and clasping the culm, ovate to lanceolate, 3–5 by 1–3 mm, acute, reddish brown. *Culms* many, lateral, erect to recurved, lateral, arising from the rhizome, 3–15(–20) cm by c. 0.5 mm, trigonous, with indistinct longitudinal grooves, pale greenish brown, smooth. *Leaves* basal; blade linear, 63–125 by 0.8–1.5 cm, gradually narrowed to an acute or slightly acuminate tip, base very gradually passing into sheath, green, 3-nerved, slightly plicate in cross section, secondary nerves fairly distinct, margin scabrid, pseudopetiole absent; sheath narrowly oblong-lanceolate, 6–12 by 1.2–1.8 cm, the top gradually narrowed into the leaf blade, pale brown, membranous margin gradually narrowed towards the apex, up to 4 mm wide, reddish brown, sometimes absent. *Involucral bracts* 2, lanceolate,

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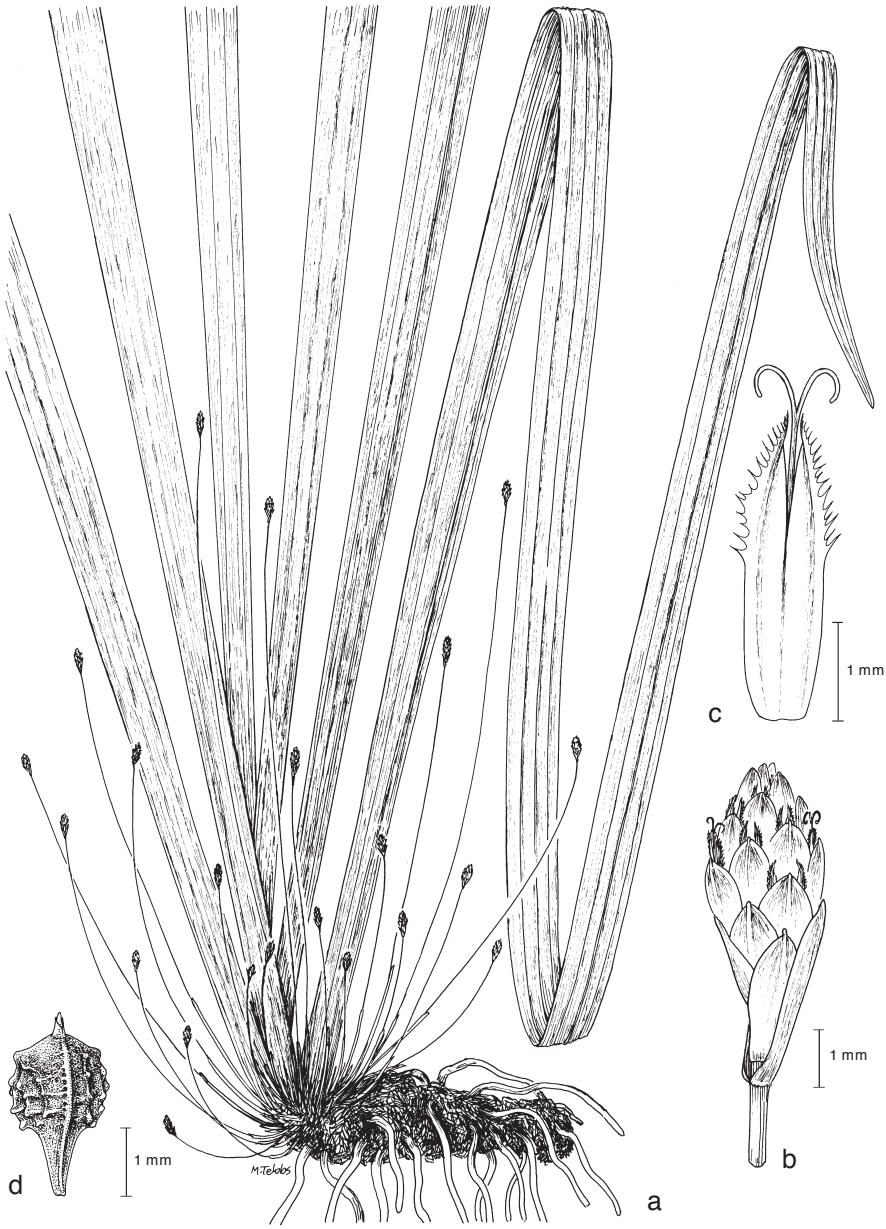


Fig. 1. *Hypolytrum unispicatum* Sosef & D.A. Simpson. a. Habit; b. inflorescence (spike); c. spicoid; d. fruit (all: *P. Tchouto, Nnangah & Elemva 3463*). Drawn by Margaret Tebbs.

2–6 mm long, glumaceous. *Inflorescence* terminal, comprising a single spike; spike ellipsoid to obovoid or almost globose in fruit, 3–5 by 1.5–4 mm, acute to rounded, reddish brown; spicoid bracts elliptic to ovate, 1.5–3 by 1–1.5 mm, rounded at the back, slightly coriaceous in the centre, with a broad membranous marginal band which splits irregularly at the apex, turning reddish brown, glabrous except for the ciliate margin; floral bracts 2, narrowly oblong-lanceolate, 2.5–3 by 0.5 mm, apex irregular, acuminate, dark reddish brown, keel ciliate; stamens 2 per spicoid, anthers white, filaments up to 3 mm long; style 0.4–0.7 mm, stigma branches 2. *Fruit* clavate, 1.8–2 by 1.5–1.8 mm, excluding the 0.1–0.5 mm long beak, with 2 distinct costae that join on the flattened basal portion of the fruit; exocarp greenish brown, shiny, tuberculate with irregular vertical ridges connecting the tubercles.

Distribution — Only known from the type locality.

Habitat & Ecology — At c. 200 m altitude in primary evergreen lowland rain forest; on a shaded, almost vertical rock face along which water seeps down. In the same locality as the recently described species *Begonia montis-elephantis* J.J. de Wilde. A colour photograph of the locality in De Wilde (2002) also shows plants of *H. unispicatum*.

Note — *Hypolytrum unispicatum* seems most closely related to *Hypolytrum secans* (K. Schum.) J. Raynal, depicted in Raynal (1968b), from which it differs in having numerous, setaceous to filiform culms, an inflorescence consisting of a single spike and glumaceous involucral bracts. It also has a superficial resemblance to *Mapania africana* Boeck. var. *filipes* J. Raynal (Raynal, 1968a), particularly because of the numerous culms with a single spike. However, in the latter the spikes are larger and there are four floral bracts per spicoid.

Additional material:

Van Andel 4174 (WAG, Kribi Herbarium), Cameroon, South Province, Campo Ma'an area, Mont d'Elephant, near stonecutters cliff at summit, Lat. 2° 47' 49" N, Long. 10° 01' 09" E, 22 October 2001.

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