

New records of *Habenaria tahitensis* NADEAUD for French Polynesia

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Abstract

While conducting our taxonomic research of Orchidaceae from Society Islands (French Polynesia), we have found new records of *Habenaria tahitensis* NADEAUD, which are listed in this text. Distinguishing characters for *Habenaria tahitensis* NADEAUD and *H. marquisensis* F. BR. are given. Changing of the present conservation status of the species is suggested.

Key words: endemism, French Polynesia, Marquises, Moorea, Tahiti; Orchidaceae, *Habenaria tahitensis*, *H. marquisensis*.

Introduction

During visits to the Bishop Museum in Hawaii, Honolulu, U.S.A. (BISH, author H.B. M.); the Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, France (P, author H.B. M.) and the Musée de Tahiti et des Îles, Punaauia, Tahiti, French Polynesia (PAP, authors H.B. M. and M. S.) herbarium material for *Habenaria tahitensis* NADEAUD and *Habenaria marquisensis* F. BR. was compared with the type specimens and each other.

Comparing the type materials of both species, *Habenaria tahitensis* and *H. marquisensis* F.BR., showed a lot of differences. The most characteristic features for *H. marquisensis* are the lanceolate and acute leaves placed along the whole stem from base to inflorescence; inflorescence subspicate, petals entire, never divided, broadly ovate; labellum 3-lobed, the lobes nearly equal in length or the middle one slightly longer, spur as long as ovary and pedicel; the gynostemium processes short. In contrast to these the characteristic features for *Habenaria tahitensis* NADEAUD are leaves in the central part of stem; inflorescence racemose, subspicate, many-flowered; petals spreading, each always divided into two divergent 1-veined segments; the upper one lanceolate, the lower one linear; spur longer than ovary plus pedicel and the bract.

Analyses of specimens showed that some specimens named *Habenaria tahitensis* var. *marquisensis* (F. BROWN) JACQUET proved to be identical with *Habenaria tahitensis* NADEAUD - no differences could be found.

Habenaria tahitensis NADEAUD, Enumération des plantes Indigènes de l'île de Tahiti: 38 (1873).

Holotype: Tahiti, Tearapeau, 1100 m, 29.05.1939 J. Nadeaud 274 [P 00311913!].

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New records: Archipelago Marquises: Île Nuku Hiva, Terre deserte, haute vallee de Tapueahu, Lat.: 8°52'S, Long.: 140°11'W, Alt. 110 m, 10.8.1987 J. Florence 8527 [P 00311919! PAP!]; – Nuku Hiva, Taipi Valley, 500 m, 07.1922. Ch. Henry 563 [BISH 114352!]; – Nuku Hiva, Western part of Tovi, along road W of l'Économie Rurale, 1170 m, 16.07.1988 W.L. Wagner, D. Lorence, J. Florence and S. Perlman 6103 [BISH 595671!]; – Nuku Hiva, records from Haute Haatuatua, 1–6.11.2007., Butaud J.F. [record of living plants]; – Archipelago Marquises, sine prec. loc., 500–700 m, 08.1921 Anonymous (Service Forestier des Îles Marquises) 133 [P 0031150!] and Ch. Henry 33 [P 00311500!, P 00311920!].

MEYER, BUTAUD & JACQ (2006: tab. 1, pp. 5–6) listed *Habenaria tahitensis* NADEAUD as endemic for Society Islands, more precisely in the tab. 3 (p. 8) postulated this species as endemic for Tahiti only. In tab. 5 (p. 12) they changed the status of *Habenaria tahitensis* NADEAUD s.str. from previous VU = vulnerable to EX = extinct. Our results show that *Habenaria tahitensis* NADEAUD s.str. has been found in Archipelago Marquises 1922, 1987, 1988 and 2007 (record of living plants). Based on these results the conservation status of this plant should be VU = vulnerable, or maybe better CR = critically endangered. Monitoring and verification of the real threat is still necessary.

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References

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