



## A new species of *Aloe* from Madagascar: *Aloe fontainei* N. Rebmann

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Exploring the cliffs and the many granitic domes situated between Antsirabe and Ambatotsipihina, in September, 1996, I discovered a species of *Aloe* which looked like *Aloe intermedia* and which I had not precisely identified. It was necessary to wait on August 18th, 2005 so that I was able to observe it in full flower in habitat. The plants obtained from seeds had bloomed in my greenhouse in April, 2005.

This species grows on cliffs and granitic domes in exposed spots with a North or Northeast aspect, partially devastated by human fire, towards 1300 m in altitude, together with several other species: *Kalanchoe orgyalis*, *Pachypodium densiflorum*, *Senecio crassissimus*, *Senecio* sp., *Begonia* sp. (Caulescent species).

The region of the high plateaus situated between Antsirabe, Ambositra, Mandronosoro and Anjoma is of a great richness in succulent plant species. Within the genus *Aloe*, many species have been discovered here such as: *Aloe pronkii*, *A. eximia*; *A. droseroides*, *A. inexpectata*, *A. calcairophylla*, *A. itremensis*, *A. compressa*, *A. erythrophylla* or other species like *Euphorbia itremensis*, *E. quartziticola*, and *Kalanchoe tetraphylla*. This new species is dedicated to Pierre Fontaine, an amateur who has sometimes travelled with me.

*Aloe fontainei* N. Rebmann sp.nov.

**Type:** Norbert Rebmann n°18; August 18th, 2005 (Holotype BR).

**Type locality:** cliffs and granitic domes, 13km east of Mandoto, 1300 m in altitude, Madagascar.



Location for *Aloe fontainei* East of Mandoto (photo : N. Rebmann).

*A. silicicola*, *A. cyrilleique affinis*, *caulescens*, *cespitosa*, *surculans ex base*, *caulis* 30 -150 cm vel +, *cum foliis erectis* 30 cm longis *subviridibus ad subrubra*. *Spicae florales* 80 - 90 cm, *erectae, fissae in 3 ad 5 partes, inflorescentia botryoides* 30- 50 cm longa, *cum floribus aurantiacis ad rubras, pedicelli* 12 - 20 mm, *scariosae bracteae* 8 - 9 mm longae.

**Description:** caulescent plant, stem slender, about 3 cm in diameter and 30-100 cm high, at first erect and then prostrate and creeping on rocks, remaining erected when the plant grows in rocky crevices and reaching in that case 150 cm high and even more.

Stems branch out from the base and new ones along the stem when it is creeping on the ground. It is ended by a rosette of about 50 cm in diameter, made of 16-20 leaves. Dry leaves persist, at least for a while, on the stem. Leaf: 30 cm long, 8-9cm wide at the base, greenish to reddish, erect, with the lower face convex. Teeth are well marked, hyaline, deltoid, 3 mm wide and 1-5 mm high.

Each rosette has 1 to 3 floral stakes branched out each with 3 to 5 ramifications, 80-90 cm long, flattened at the base (15 mm thick). The inflorescences in clusters measure 30 to 50 cm long. Bracts are scariosus, 12-16mm long, and pedicels 12-20mm long with flowers 20-25mm long. Petals are slightly longer than sepals and have the tip margin white. Fruits are dehiscent capsules, 18-20 mm long.

**Taxonomical situation:** this species is close to *Aloe silicicola* described by H.Perrier, whose site is still unknown until today, but leaves are smaller, the floral stakes are larger, as well as the inflorescences, with flowers smaller. Moreover, *Aloe silicicola* grows,



*Aloe fontainei* at end of flowering (photo : N. Rebmann).



*Aloe fontainei* with old inflorescences (photo : N. Rebmann).



*Aloe fontainei* at end of flowering (photo : N. Rebmann).

according to H. Perrier, towards 2000 m in altitude, more to the East along the river Manandona. Recently described by J.B.Castillon, *Aloe cyrillei* shows an inflorescence similar to this new species.

Text and photos: Norbert Rebmann

Acknowledgement : Thanks to Laurent for the Latin diagnosis.

### Éléments de Comparaison avec les espèces similaires

Taxon	Leaves	Stem	Inflorescence	Perianth
<i>Aloe fontainei</i>	erect 8-9cm. at the base 30cm L.	30-100cm L. 3cm in diameter	3-5 branches 30-50cm.	20-25mm
<i>Aloe silicicola</i>	reflexed or spread 7-8cm at the base 40-50cm L.	2m L. 5cm in diameter	3-4 branches 50-60cm.	28-30mm
<i>Aloe cyrillei</i>	erect spread and curved 8cm at the base 40cm L.	stemless to slightly caulescent	3-5 branches 1,2m.	?

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:**

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