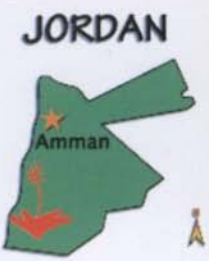


Aloe porphyrostachys Lavr. & Collenette spp. *koenenii* (Lavr. & K. Koch) J. Lodé comb. nov.

In 2006, John Lavranos and Kerstin Koch published in the Cactus and Succulent American journal, September-October issue, the diagnosis and the description of *Aloe koenenii* Lavr. & K. Koch, a new species close to *Aloe porphyrostachys* Lavr. & Collenette.

Actually, and as indicated in the article, it is about the species that I discovered in 1985 in Petra, Jordan, and which was taken by resemblance and by mistake for the same that was described in 2000 by Lavranos and Collenette, and found in Saudi Arabia, ***A. porphyrostachys***.

Petra's plant was thus named ***Aloe koenenii***.

The differences to justify the creation of a new species are small: tiny details of the epidermis, pollen creamish-yellow instead of orange in ***A. porphyrostachys***, and leaves are densely spotted in the young plants, as in ***Aloe vera***, in the group of which doubtlessly these two taxa belong.

For these reasons and considering the degree of anteriority of the description (not the discovery!), I propose the following combination: ***A. porphyrostachys*** ssp. ***koenenii*** (Lavr. & K. Koch) J. Lodé comb. nov.

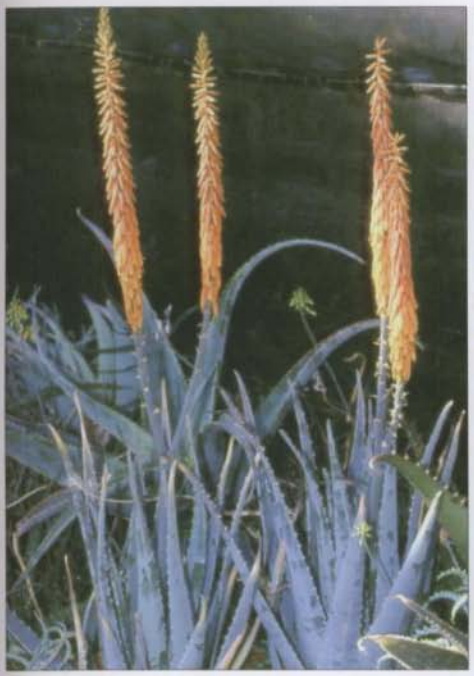
In the same article of John Lavranos and Kerstin Koch, it is said that plants from Petra arise from the single same clone. I would like to remind the reader that I obtained fertile seeds of the two collected clones, which were sown by different nurserymen, and which gave well typified plants. It is to be noted that, at least in cultivation and unlike ***A. vera***, ***A. porphyrostachys*** ssp. ***koenenii*** produces only a few offsets (1-3 a year).

• NOTES ON STERILITY

It leaves me much to think about and brings me to another observation made some years ago with one cactus, ***Monvillea cavendishii*** which was full of flowers every year, but for lack of having a second clone, no fruits were developed, the flowers falling soon after the flowering. And then, one year, the miracle occurred, my plant gave fertile fruits, plum-like, never seen previously and seeds that I distributed around me. However, it never produced fruits again...

A curiously identical phenomenon occurred for my ***Aloe*** ex ***"porphyrostachys"***: they

Aloe porphyrostachys ssp. *koenenii* in my collection in Andalucia. (Photo : J.L.).



Aloe porphyrostachys ssp. ***koenenii*** in my collection in Tenerife. (Photo : J.L.).

Aloe porphyrostachys ssp. ***koenenii*** in my collection in Andalucia. (infl.) (Photo : J.L.).

never produced seeds again, and that, in spite of my attempts of cross pollination between the two clones, in the morning, then in the evening, including with material resulting from ***Aloe vera***. It would be necessary to conclude that from this experience there are years with seeds and years without... Further observations will be necessary to discover what is even today still a mystery: that of the wild origin of ***Aloe vera***.

What is certain, some German scientist came one day to look in Spain for genetic material of the clones that I had collected. Because its relationship within the ***Aloe vera*** group, it lets me think that this new species could indeed have a possible and interesting pharmaceutical use.

Basionym: ***Aloe koenenii*** Lavr. & K. Koch, *Cact. and Succ. J. (US)* 78: 222-223 (2006). Topotype at the "Centro de Propagación de Plantas Suculentas", Cuevas del Almanzora, Almeria, Spain (JL1985).

Text and photos: J.L.

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