

## SHORT COMMUNICATION

***Astartea pulchella* (Myrtaceae: Chamelaucieae), a new combination for *Baeckea pulchella*, and the reduction of *A. laricifolia* to synonymy**

The true identity of *Baeckea pulchella* DC. has been obscured by an incorrect locality, ‘east coast’, given in the protologue (de Candolle 1828) and the subsequent misapplication of the name by Bentham (1867). Like many other early taxonomic authors, de Candolle gave very little information on each of his new species. For *B. pulchella* his description of the leaves as densely arranged and the pedicels as one-flowered suggested the most likely candidate on the east coast of Australia would be *Harmogia densifolia* Schauer, although that species differs in tending to have flower stalks shorter than the leaves, rather than about equal in length as in *B. pulchella*.

Bentham did not examine type material but assumed, based on the brief description in the protologue, that the name *B. pulchella* applied to a Western Australian species that had been placed in a new genus by Turczaninov (1847) as *Ericomyrtus drummondii* Turcz. Even ignoring the ‘east coast’ locality given in the protologue, this seemed a highly unlikely fit for de Candolle’s species. *Baeckea pulchella* must have been one that occurred near the coast for it to have been collected well before the publication date of 1828. *Ericomyrtus drummondii* occurs at least 75 km from all such early collecting sites in Western Australia. It differs from de Candolle’s description of *B. pulchella* in having persistent bracteoles, and by having flower stalks that tend to be longer than the leaves. It is clear, therefore, that Bentham misapplied the name *B. pulchella* to the species known today as *E. drummondii* (Rye 2015).

Recent examination of images from G-DC has revealed a surprising identity for *B. pulchella*, as it is based entirely or partially on material of the species that was later named as *Astartea laricifolia* Schauer. Apparently, de Candolle overlooked the fact that the stamens were in antisepalous fascicles, a character that would have shown the specimen to belong to his own new genus *Astartea* DC., which was named earlier in the same publication (de Candolle 1828: 210).

In view of the above, a new combination in *Astartea* is provided here for *Baeckea pulchella*, a lectotype is designated for this name, and *A. laricifolia* is reduced to synonymy.

**New combination and typification**

***Astartea pulchella* (DC.) Rye, *comb. nov.***

*Baeckea pulchella* DC., *Prodr.* 3: 230 (1828). *Type citation*: ‘in Novâ-Hollandiâ orient’. *Type specimens*: ‘Nouvelle Hollande, côte orient. Mus. de Paris 1821’ [probably collected from King George Sound, Western Australia, no collector indicated] (*lecto*: G 00487261, here designated). ‘Nouvelle Hollande, côte orient. Mus. de Paris 1821’ [Western Australia, no collector indicated] (possible/excluded *syn*: G 00486347).

*Astartea laricifolia* Schauer in W.G. Walpers, *Repert. Bot. Syst.* 2: 922 (1843). *Type citation*: ‘In paludosus ad Sinum Regis Georgi III’. *Type specimens*: King George Sound, [Western Australia], 31 January 1818, *A. Cunningham* 81 (*lecto*: BM 000758993, *fide* B.L. Rye, *Nuytsia* 16: 154 (2006); *isolecto*: BM 000758994 & 000758995, PERTH 07010834).

*Astartea* sp. wing tips (M.E. Trudgen 12044), G. Paczkowska & A.R. Chapman, *W. Austral. Fl.: Descr. Cat.* 345 (2000); J. Wheeler, N. Marchant & M. Lewington, *Fl. South West* 2: 688 (2002).

*Notes*. Images of two sheets at G-DC were examined, both annotated in the same handwriting, with ‘*Leptospermum* Nouvelle Holland, côte orient. Mus. de Paris 1821’ attached to the base of the specimens. Only one of the sheets, that chosen as a lectotype (G 00487261), has a further label in the bottom right-hand corner of the sheet giving the name *Baeckea pulchella* DC., and material mounted on the other sheet (G 00486347) is clearly of a different species. However, both collections belong to the genus *Astartea* and match the protologue of *B. pulchella* in their vegetative characters and in having solitary, axillary, pedicellate flowers.

G 00487261 is also a good match for the description of the flowers as numerous and ebracteolate. Fortunately, this specimen is readily identifiable from the image because it has two distinctive characters that are unique within *Astartea*, these being the distinct wings on its young stems and the small size of its peduncles relative to the size of its pedicels. This is the species that was treated as *A. laricifolia* by Rye (2013) and therefore that name is now reduced to a synonym under *A. pulchella*.

The other specimen, G 00486347, represents a species of *Astartea* that cannot be identified further based on the image alone. It differs from the lectotype in not having the young stems conspicuously winged and in having peduncles longer than the pedicels. There are only a few flowers on the specimen but one of them has a persistent bracteole. A number of *Astartea* species could match the image. Whether or not this specimen should be regarded as a syntype is doubtful in view of its small number of flowers and the lack of a sheet label identifying it as *B. pulchella*. However, the label attached to its base is identical to that of the other specimen; this suggests that choosing a lectotype may be the safest course of action rather than assuming that G 00487261 is a holotype.

As to the locality of the type material, King George Sound seems most likely. Several collections of Western Australian plants were made at King George Sound prior to 1821, which was indicated as the year that material from Paris was received in Geneva. *Astartea pulchella* certainly was collected there in January 1818 by Allan Cunningham (the type collection for *A. laricifolia*) during the species’ peak summer flowering period from mid-December to early February. Although Robert Brown visited King George Sound during the summer of 1801–1802, he apparently did not collect this species (Western Australian Herbarium 1998–). The following summer, Nicolas Baudin, Antoine Guichenot and Jean-Baptiste Leschenault de la Tour visited King George Sound (see George 2009), so they may well have collected the type material. Another possible locality is Geographe Bay, visited by Baudin’s expedition in March 1803, although this would probably have been after the flowering season had ended for *A. pulchella*.

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## Barbara L. Rye

Western Australian Herbarium, Department of Parks and Wildlife,  
Locked Bag 104, Bentley Delivery Centre, Western Australia 6983

