

RAVENEAE HILDEBRANDTII.

Native of the Comoro Islands.

Nat. Ord. PALMÆ.—Tribe CHAMÆDORÆÆ.

Genus RAVENEAE, Bouché; (*Benth. et Hook. f. Gen. Pl. vol. iii. p. 883, nomen tantum.*)

CHAR. GEN.—*Flores* dioici (v. monoici), in spadibus interfoliaceis simpliciter ramosis pedicellati, bracteolati, carnosuli. Fl. ♂. *Calyx* cupularis, 3-lobus. *Petala* 3, basi connata, ovato-oblonga, acuminata, sæpe 2-dentata, patentia, 3-5-nervia, valvata. *Stamina* 6, filamentis brevibus subulatis basi inter se et basi corollæ cohærentibus; antheræ oblongæ, basifixæ. *Oearii* rudimentum minimum, globosum, trifidum. Fl. ♀ masculos subæquantes. *Calyx* cupularis, 3-lobus. *Petala* 3, oblongo-lanceolata, acuminata, 3-5-nervia, erecta. *Staminodia* 6, maxima, antheris magnis cassis. *Ovarium* lageniforme, 3-loculare, loculis 2 effæctis; stigmata late trigona, recurva; ovulum parietale, pendulum. *Fructus* (memoriter) parvulus, curvus, stigmatibus subbasilaribus. *Semen* minimum, ellipsoideum, hilo parvo, rapheos ramis nullis, albumine æquabili; embryo hilo proximus.—*Palma gracilis, erecta, inermis. Folia longe petiolata, primordialia bifida, petiolo plano-concavo, costa apice in filum excurrente; segmentis lineari-lanceolatis acuminatis, costa subtus paleacea, paleis verticalibus oblongis lacris sæpe semi-lunatis. Spadices longe pedunculati; spathæ 4, tubulosæ, fusco-tomentosæ, persistentes; ♂ recurvi, ramis brevibus densifloris patentibus; ♀ erecti, rachi elongata, ramis filiformibus strictis basi incrassatis. Flores pallide straminei. Fructus niger.*—Wendl. MSS.

R. Hildebrandtii, Bouché in *Monats. Verein. Beford. Gartenb.* 1878, 197, 323, cum ic. xylog. 324. Lemaire Ill. *Hortic.* vol. xxvii. p. 164, cum ic.

A very elegant dwarf Palm, a native of the Comoro Islands, of which but little has hitherto been known, for in the publications cited above, no description is given of flower or fruit, and figures of palms without these are as valueless as are those of grasses similarly destitute of organs of fructification. The specimen cultivated at Kew flowered for the first time last summer, and when still a small (male) plant, standing on the shelf of the palm-house; and I immediately wrote to Mr. Wendlan about it, who answered that he had materials for describing the female plant and fruit, and would forward these to me. This is the source of the full description of the genus given above, and it

only remains to add that *Ravenea* is allied to *Hyophorbe*, which differs in its robust habit, in being monœcious, and in the flowers being arranged in interrupted lines along the branches of the spadix which is infrafoliaceous. The name *Ravenea* was given by the late M. Bouché, who sent seeds to Mr. Wendland, who declined to name them without further materials. Unfortunately Mr. Wendland has mislaid the seeds, and gives the description of them from memory. He informs me that they are the smallest of the order in so far as he knows, as also that in the figure of the section of the ovary here given, fig. 9, the insertion of the ovules is wrong, for their point of attachment should be a little above the base of the cell. Mr. Wendland describes the genus as diœcious, but (as shown in figs. 3 and 4) male and hermaphrodite flowers occur on the same spadix.—
J. D. H.

Fig. 1, Reduced figure of the whole palm; 2, portions of leaflets with paleæ on costa; 3, male, and 4, hermaphrodite flower; 5, calyx-tube; 6, bracteole; 7, petal; 8, ovary; 9, vertical section of ditto:—*all enlarged.*



M.S. del., J.N. Pich. lith.

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