

7.7. *Launaea* sect. *Castanospermae*

Launaea sect. *Castanospermae* N. Kilian, **sect. nova**

Type and only species: *Launaea castanosperma* F.G. Davies

Herba perennis, plerumque crassa, caule erecto inferne foliato vel foliis basaliter rosulatis, synflorescentia subdivaricata. Capitulorum involucrem subglobosum, bracteis inferioribus 8-12, post anthesin non prolongatis. Achaenia crassa, truncata, heteromorpha, interiora costis principalibus quattuor, intima glabra, laevia et pallida, sequentia dense brunneo-papillacea papillis grossis, rigidis, triangularibus, marginalia costis principalibus quinque, laeviter compressa et curvata, aliter velut in praecedentibus. Pappus dimorphus, radiis exterioribus byssaceis numerosis persistentibus et radiis interioribus setaceis paucis ± deciduis.

Launaea castanosperma, the only species of this section, is endemic to S Arabia and has a distinct combination of features. The involucre is subglobose with 8-12 inner involucre bracts. The conspicuously bulky achenes have a cottony pappus, and are heteromorphic; the innermost achenes are glabrous the outer having a dense, brown indumentum of coarse papillose excrescences (Figs 10c-f) unlike any other species in the genus. The many-bracteate involucre, the densely papillose achene indumentum and the cottony pappus of the same type as in *L. angustifolia* and *L. quercifolia* suggest a closer relationship to *L. sect. Zollikoferia*, but achene shape, and in particular the pericarp anatomy (several mesocarp layers above the main sclerenchymatous strands, clear differentiation in the size of the main and secondary strands, additional groups of sclerenchymatous cells between the main and secondary strands, see general morphological part, and Figs 17d, 18) provide evidence that the species is more closely related to *L. sect. Microrhynchus* and sect. *Launaea* instead. Also unlike in *L. sect. Zollikoferia*, the involucre is not prolonged towards fruiting time.

Considering the unusual combination of features of this species, as well as its unique achene indumentum, it appears most appropriate to consider *L. castanosperma* as a taxonomically fairly isolated palaeoendemic, to be placed in a section of its own.

Launaea castanosperma

Launaea castanosperma F.G. Davies in Kew Bull. 33: 294. 1979. – Holotype: Oman, Dhofar mountains, Derbal, near coast, 1895, *Bent* 233 (K!) – Fig. 76.

lc.: Figs 4g, 10c-f, 17d, 18, 76. – For the first time illustrated here.

Description

Perennial herb or subshrub with strong taproot, c. (15)30-80 cm high at anthesis, with a robust, erect, almost leafless flowering stem up to 8 mm in diameter. Leaves in a basal rosette or crowded in the basal portion of the stem; in older plants base woody and branched, with a few leaf rosettes and with 2 or more flowering stems at the same time. *Rosette leaves* 4-11 × 2-6 mm, obovate to