

synonymy proves to be correct, it dramatically alters the distribution pattern of the species as understood from material named with certainty, extending its range considerably to the east. New material is required from the type locality of the Clemens collections to confirm this decision.

**3. *Rhopaloblaste gideonii* R. Banka sp. nov.**, palma elata rachillis fructiferis moderate validis. *R. ceramicae* affinis, a qua imprimis fructibus symmetricis, inflorescentiis in duos (non tres) ordines ramiflucantibus, floribus bracteis cingentibus non involutis differt. Typus: Papua New Guinea, New Ireland Province, Namatanai Distr., Hans Meyer Range, 70 km SE of Namatanai, Nov. 1984, *Gideon et al.* NGF 57194 (holotypus L!; isotypus LAE!).

Moderately robust solitary palm. *Stem* to 25 m tall, c. 20 cm diam.; leaf scars prominent; surface greyish brown. *Leaf* sheath 55–65 cm long, greyish brown, densely lepidote-tomentose with whitish brown interlocking scales; crownshaft 60–70 cm long, 27–30 cm wide; petiole short, 8–10 cm long, concave on adaxial surface, greyish brown; rachis 3–4 m long, with white to greyish brown membranous scales, denser on the adaxial surface; leaflets 100–103 each side of rachis, borne 2.5–3 cm apart, in one plane, semi-pendulous, middle leaflet 72–80 cm long, 1.5–2.5 cm wide, elliptic-linear, tapering acutely and bifid at the apex, adaxial surface green, abaxial surface light green with ramenta present sparsely along the mid veins on the abaxial surface, greyish brown to black membranous scales present on adaxial surface of mid-veins especially near the base of pinnae. *Inflorescence* 58–65 cm long, branched to 2 orders; primary branches 12–13, 50–60 cm long, basal pair of primary branches strongly recurved; prophyll 29–38 × 7–8.5 cm, silky-tomentose; peduncle 1–2 cm long, 1.5–2.3 cm diam.; rachillae moderately robust, 42–54 cm long, 6–6.5 mm diam. *Staminate flower* symmetric, 7–7.5 mm long, 3.8–4.1 mm diam. at anthesis; sepals 2.4–2.5 × 2–2.4 mm, rounded and imbricate; petals 6–6.1 × 4–4.1 mm, broadly elliptic; stamens 6.6–6.8 mm long, filaments 2.5–3 mm long, connate at the base, anthers 3.7–3.8 mm long, 1–1.1 mm diam., elliptic; pistillode conical, 3.5–3.6 mm long, 1–1.2 mm diam. at the base. *Pistillate flower* 5–5.5 mm long, 5.2–5.4 mm diam., borne abundantly on the proximal portion of the rachillae, then fewer distally; sepals 4–4.1 × 5.8–6 mm, rounded and asymmetrical; petals 4.3–4.4 × 3.5–3.6 mm, broadly elliptic, apex with 1 mm acute tip, sparse brownish hairs on the middle part of the margin; staminodes 4, lobes 1–1.1 × 0.2–0.3 mm at the base, acute at the apex; gynoeceium 3.8–4 mm long, 3.3–3.5 mm wide, ovoid. *Fruit* only immature

fruit seen, 16–18 mm long, 6–8 mm diam., ellipsoid-ovoid; cupule of persistent perianth 8.5–9 mm long. *Seed* not seen. Fig. 2.

**DISTRIBUTION.** Known only from the type locality in the Hans Meyer Range, New Ireland.

**HABITAT.** Lower montane forest at 800 m above sea level, dominated by *Serianthes* and *Elmerillia* species.

**LOCAL NAME.** Not known.

**COMMON NAME.** Not known.

**USES.** Not known.

**CONSERVATION STATUS.** Data deficient. The forests of New Ireland have been extensively logged. The conservation status of this endemic palm should be evaluated at the earliest opportunity.

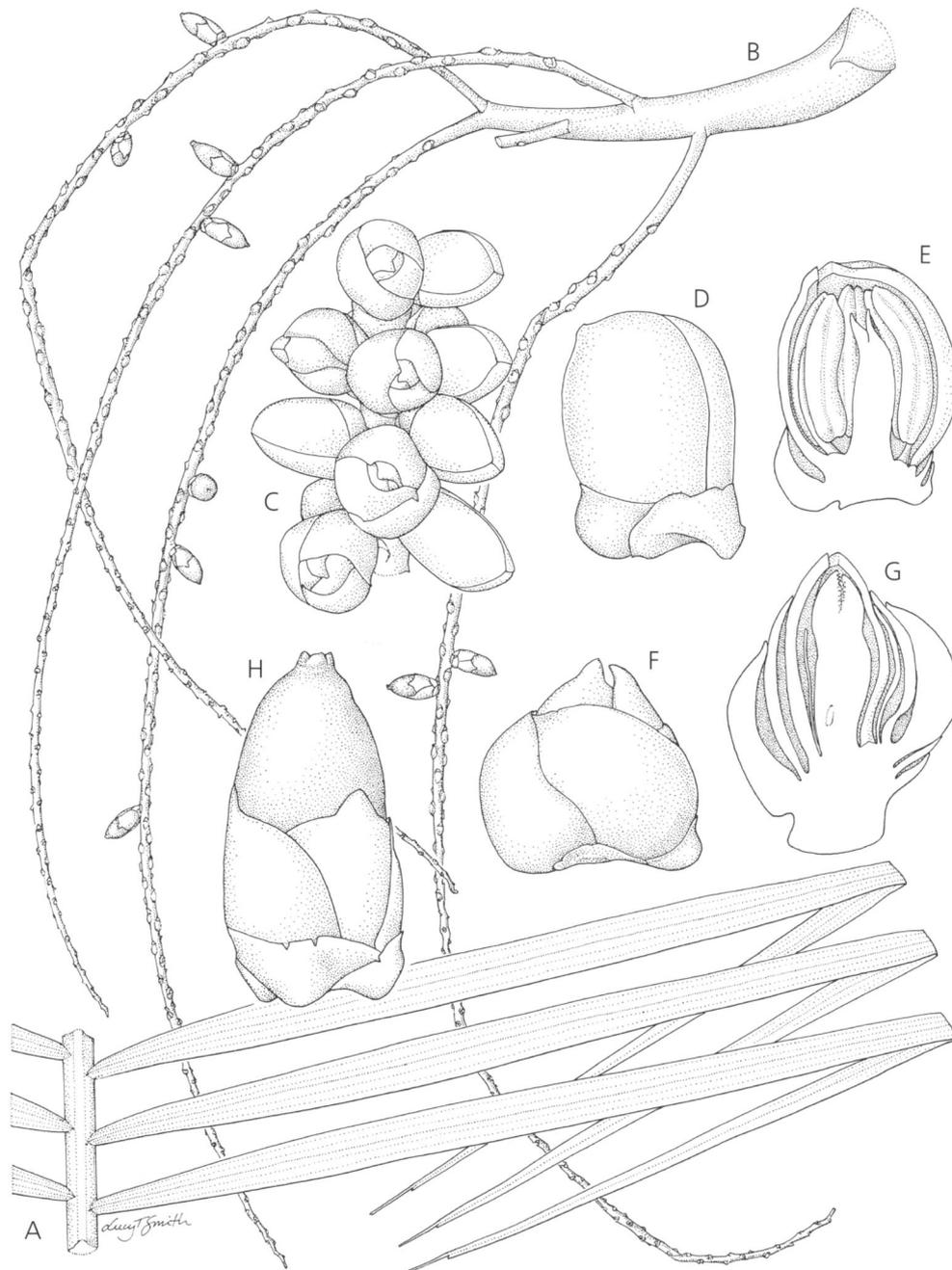
**SPECIMENS EXAMINED. PAPUA NEW GUINEA.** New Ireland Province: Namatanai Distr., Hans Meyer Range, 70 km SE of Namatanai, Nov. 1984, *Gideon et al.* NGF 57194 (L!, LAE!, type).

**NOTES.** This new species is known only from the type locality and cannot be readily equated with other species. It is easily distinguished from two of the Papuan species, *R. ledermanniana* and *R. elegans*, on account of its robust fruit-bearing rachillae. It resembles *R. ceramica* in its moderately robust fruit-bearing rachillae, but differs in bearing inflorescences branched to two orders only and a smaller cupule of persistent perianth on the fruit. In *R. ceramica*, the inflorescences are branched to three orders and the fruit bears a large, robust cupule of persistent perianth. While the fruit on the type of *R. gideonii* are immature, the persistent perianth is significantly less robust than that of immature *R. ceramica* fruit. In addition, the type locality is disjunct from the known distribution of *R. ceramica* in Sandaun Province, Papua New Guinea.

*Rhopaloblaste gideonii* is named for the collector of the type specimen, Osia Gideon, formerly Principal Botanist at the LAE Herbarium (Papua New Guinea Forest Research Institute), now lecturer in the Biology Department at the University of Papua New Guinea, in recognition of his contributions to botany in Papua New Guinea.

**4. *Rhopaloblaste elegans* H. E. Moore**, Principes 10: 94 (1966). Type: Solomon Islands, Guadalcanal, Honiara, March 1964, *Moore et al.* 9310 (BSIP 4085) (holotype BH; isotypes BSIP, K!).

Moderately robust solitary mid-canopy palm bearing up to 10–14 leaves in the crown, with a mass of short, stout adventitious roots present at the stem base. *Stem* to 12 m tall or more, 15–20 cm diam.; surface grey-brown, becoming light grey distally, with chocolate-brown scales on new internodes, leaf scars prominent. *Leaf* sheath 60–70 cm long, light green with dense



**Fig. 2.** *Rhopaloblaste gideonii*. **A** middle portion of leaf  $\times \frac{1}{4}$ ; **B** first order branch of inflorescence  $\times \frac{1}{2}$ ; **C** detail of rachilla  $\times 4$ ; **D**, **E** staminate flower whole and longitudinal section  $\times 6$ ; **F**, **G** pistillate flower whole and longitudinal section  $\times 6$ ; **H** immature fruit  $\times 3$ . All from *Gideon et al.* LAE 57194. DRAWN BY LUCY T. SMITH.