24. DYPSIS DECIPIENS

One of the most imposing palms of the island, but that may have something to do with its occurring in the austere surroundings of the Central Plateau, where it stands out dramatically. This makes a wonderful ornamental, able to withstand some cold (though not freezing) and periods of dry weather. The species name means 'deceiving', indicating that it closely resembles something else; in this case, it is a particularly inappropriate name!

DISTRIBUTION. Central Madagascar, between Ankazobe and Fianarantsoa.
HABITAT. Plateau forest (remnants), either near streams or in rocky sites; alt. 1400–2000 m.
LOCAL NAMES. *Betefaka*, *Manambe* (Imerina), *Sihara leibe* (Betsileo).
USES. Good palm heart; leaves used for erosion control (Betsileo).
CONSERVATION STATUS. Endangered. The number of individuals in the wild is estimated at around two hundred; their distribution area is prone to destruction and fire. This species is listed in CITES Annexe II.

Dypsis decipiens
(x: sight records)

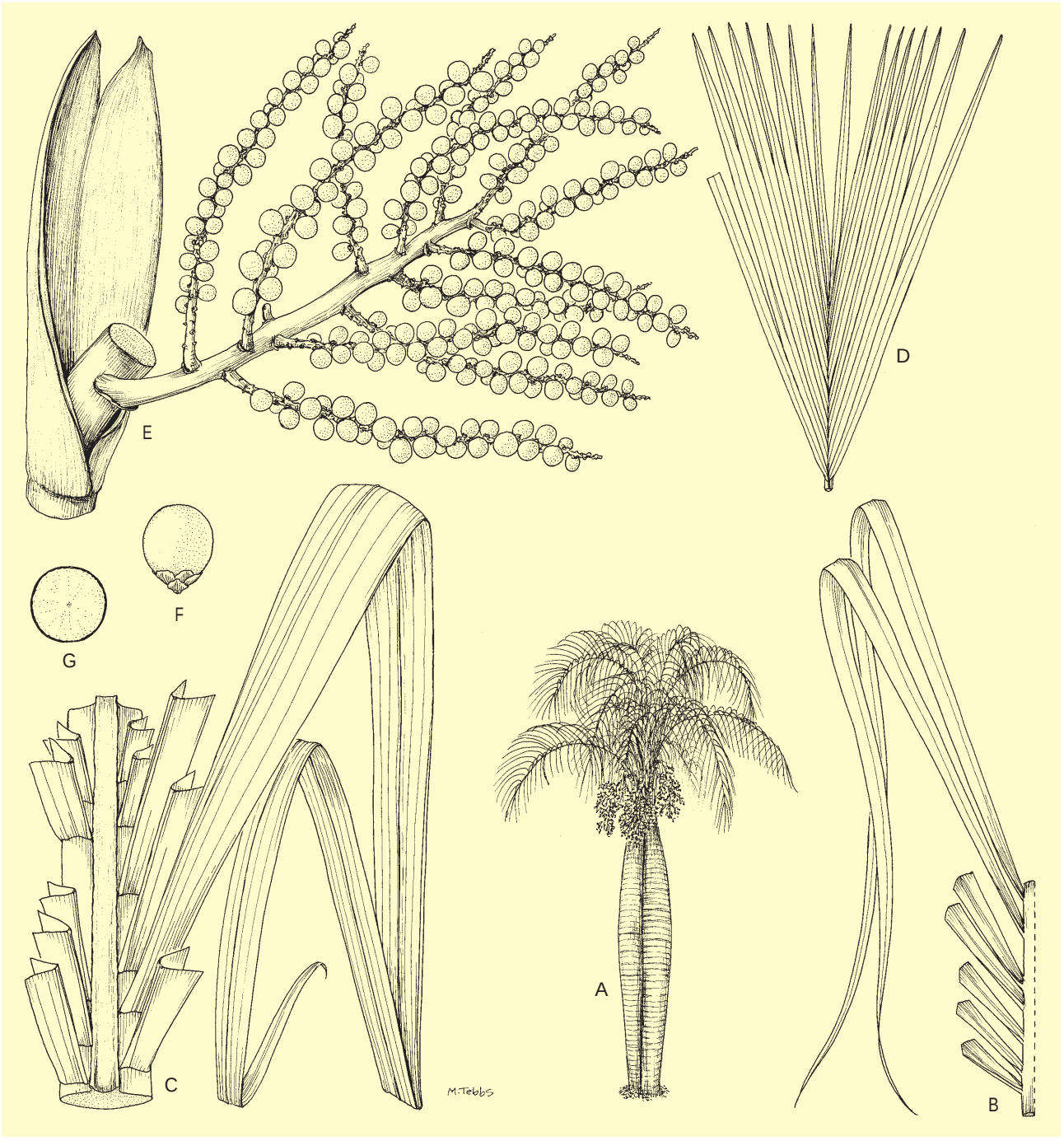
Dypsis decipiens *(Becc.) Beentje & J. Dransf.* **comb. nov.**

SYNONYMS:
Chrysalidocarpus decipiens Beccari, Bot. Jahrb. Syst. 38, Beibl. 87: 36 (1906); Jum., Ann. Inst. Bot.-Géol. Colon. Marseille sér. 10, 3: 26 (1922); & Cat. Pl. Madagascar, Palmae: 8 (1938); Jum. & H. Perrier, Fl. Madagascar 30: 111, fig. 30 (1945). Lectotype: Madagascar, central Madagascar, *Baron* 3271 (K, lectotype, indicated here; isotype P).
Macrophloga decipiens (Beccari) Beccari, Palme del Madag.: 47, t. 46, fig. 38 (1914), pro parte (excl. *Perrier* 12088).

Imposing and handsome clustering palm, sometimes appearing solitary but more often in pairs or with younger shoots at the base. **TRUNK** 6–20 m high, ventricose; 50–70 cm diam., at the very base 30–40 cm diam., near the crown 25–30 cm diam.; internodes 4–5 cm long, grey, more distally shiny green, nodal scars c. 2 cm high, grey-brown; crownshaft pale waxy-grey-green. **LEAVES** 9–12 in the crown, spirally inserted, porrect; sheath c. 70 cm long, pale green with waxy white bloom, adaxially dark chestnut red-brown, one-third to half open in the oldest leaf, with brown ligules where the sheath margin makes a right angle towards the base of the petiole, with waxy scales or glabrous; petiole 10–25 cm long, proximally c. 11 x 5 cm, distally c. 7 x 5 cm diam., deeply channelled with sharp edges; rachis c. 2.2 m long, channelled proximally, in mid-leaf 3–4 x 2–2.7 cm diam. and keeled, with whitish tomentum or glabrous; leaflets c. 90 on each side of the rachis, in groups of 2–6, fanned within the groups giving the leaf a plumose appearance (though almost in one plane in very young trees), stiff with only the apices bending over, the proximal 70–94 x 1.3–1.7 cm (the most proximal often very long, narrow and pendulous), median 73–101 x 2.8–4.3 cm, distal 26–42 x 0.8–1.2 cm, in mid-leaf interval < 0.5–1 cm, the interval between the groups 3–8 cm, main veins 1, the other veins faint, apices attenuate and unequally bifid, with sparse large (1 cm) red-brown ramenta on the proximal midrib, and many small scattered reddish scales on the fainter veins. **INFLORESCENCE** infrafoliar, strongly curved, branched to 2 orders, c. 110 x 65 cm; peduncle 15–17 cm long, 9–10 x 4–6 cm diam.; prophyll 39–41 x c. 10 cm, borne at 6–6.5 cm above the base of the peduncle, split abaxially,

Dypsis decipiens. Form with rather glaucous leaves, Itremo Massif (Photo D. Du Puy).

Dypsis decipiens, growing on a rocky hill, Itremo Massif (Photo: D. Du Puy).



Dypsis decipiens. **A** habit, greatly reduced; **B** proximal part of leaf with lowermost leaflets x 1/4; **C** mid section of leaf x 1/4; **D** leaf tip x 1/4; **E** part of infructescence with first order branch x 1/4; **F** fruit x 1/2; **G** fruit in cross section x 1/2. **A**, from a photograph, **B** – **G** from *Beentje et al.* 4658. Drawn by Margaret Tebbs.

but distally with a small horizontal adaxial split, dark brown, ± glabrous; peduncular bract insertion point uncertain, quickly deciduous, 42–58 x 12–16 cm, opening over its whole length except for the beaked apex 5–6 cm long, pale waxy brown with scattered scales; rachis c. 60 cm, greyish white, glabrous, with c. 13 branched and 18 unbranched first order branches, the more proximal of these with flattened bases to 4.7 x 1.3 cm diam.; rachis bracts c. 9 mm high; rachillae 7–40 cm long, 3.5–7 mm diam., with distant triads in pits; rachilla bracts 2.5–3 x 3.5 mm, acute. **STAMINATE FLOWERS** with sepals 2–4 x 1.8–2.5 mm, concave, keeled, gibbous, with membranous margins, apiculate; petals connate for 1.3–1.6 mm, the free lobes 3.8–5.6 x 2.3–3.7 mm, ovate, acute to obtuse; stamens 6, in 1 series, the filaments (2–) 3.2–5 mm long and connate at base for 0.3 mm, anthers 2.3–2.8 x 0.8–1.4 mm, dorsifixed, versatile; pistillode columnar,1.9–2.7 x 0.7–1.5 mm. **PISTILLATE FLOWERS** with sepals 5.1–6.3 x 3.5–5 mm, concave, orbicular, with small hooded tip; petals resembling the sepals, 4–5.3 x 3–3.8 mm, concave, ovate, with small apiculus, staminodes 0.3–0.5 mm, dentiform; ovary 3.5–4.3 mm high, 1.5–2 mm diam. **FRUIT** broadly ellipsoid or almost globose, colour unknown, 22–25 x 20–22 mm; endocarp very fibrous with long anastomosing fibres. **SEED** 10–20 x 11.5–18mm, with rounded base and apex; endosperm homogeneous.

NOTE. Beccari established the new genus *Macrophloga* based on two different taxa: his own *Chrysalidocarpus decipiens*, and *Neodypsis basilongus* based on a Perrier specimen (no. 12088) with seed showing ruminate endosperm. True *Chrysalidocarpus decipiens* has

homogeneous endosperm. The combination *Neodypsis decipiens* (Becc.) Jumelle & Perrier existed only in Beccari's imagination; Jumelle & Perrier (1913) mentioned the possibility but specifically refrained from making it.

HB has seen bees visiting the flowers of a cultivated specimen in Antananarivo.

SPECIMENS SEEN. Ankazobe: Manankazo, sine die (bud), *Perrier* 12099 (P). Manjakandriana: (probably all from Andrangolaoka), *Baron* 502 (K, P; syntype), *Baron* 3271 (K, syntype); & *Baron* s.n. (K); Ambatoloana to Mandraka, ?1936 (fr.), *Boiteau* s.n.(P). Ambositra: 24km S of Ambositra, April 1992 (seed), *Beentje et al.* 4658 (BH, K, MO, P, TAN). Ambohimahasoa: Ankafina forest, March 1881 (fl.), *Hildebrandt* 3974a (K, syntype).

CULTIVATED. Antananarivo Botanic Garden, Jan. 1938 (fl.), *Herb. Jard. Bot. Tan.* 3091 (K, P); idem, Oct. 1940 (fl.), *Decary* 15889 (P); idem, April 1971 (y.fr.), *Moore* 9923 (P).

SIGHT RECORDS. Manerinerina (*Dransfield & Beentje*). Manjakandriana: Ikopa R. sources (*Perrier*). Antsirabe: Vavato (*Perrier*). Ambositra: Ranomena (*Beentje*); Ilaka (*Dransfield & Beentje*). Ambohimahasoa: NW of Ranomafana (*Beentje*).

Dypsis decipiens, view of crown in flower, Itremo Massif (Photo: D. Du Puy).

25. DYPSIS BASILONGA

A rare and elegant palm, apparently confined to a single hill which is now surrounded by a sea of cultivation and secondary vegetation. We have seen this species *in situ* in the type locality, but the inflorescences were too rotten to make a proper specimen. It is a compact, rather graceful palm, common in the low-canopy thin-stemmed small-crown forest just below the summit of Mt Vatovavy at 450–500 m altitude, growing on the edges of cliffs in what is probably a wind-swept habitat. The species name refers to the 'basal' leaflets nearest the petiole, which are sometimes very long.

DISTRIBUTION. Only known from Vatovavy.
HABITAT. Small-crown, submontane forest, on gneiss; 300–500 m.
LOCAL NAMES. *Madiovozona* (Tanala; meaning 'clean neck').
USES. Excellent palm-heart.
CONSERVATION STATUS. Endangered. Single-site status; the only protection of the forest derives from local fady (taboos).

Dypsis basilonga *(Jum. & H. Perrier) Beentje & J. Dransf.* **comb. nov.**

SYNONYMS:
Neodypsis basilongus Jum. & H. Perrier, Ann. Inst. Bot.-Géol. Colon. Marseille sér. 2, 3, 1 (1): 16, pl. 4 (1913); Jum., Ann. Inst. Bot.-Géol. Colon. Marseille sér. 4, 2 (2): 11 (1924); Jum., Cat. Pl.

Dypsis basilonga