

TRIBAL REVISIONS IN THE ASTERACEAE. VI.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF ERIACHAENIUM

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The genus Eriachaenium of Patagonia was described by Schultz Bipontinus (1855) who placed the genus near Osteospermum of the almost exclusively African tribe Calenduleae. The latter genus does have over thirty species with one on the island of St. Helena, but it is still geographically remote from Eriachaenium. Bentham (1873) said under his remarks on the Calendulaceae, "Eriachaenium is another monotypic genus, which Schultz has correctly referred to this African tribe, although it comes from a distant land, Antarctic America. It is anomalous in habit, but nearer to Oligocarpus than to any other genus". Bentham was, of course, followed by Hoffman (1894). No satisfactory reason has ever been given for this incredible disposition of the genus although the very short branches of the style must have been a factor.

It was inevitable that the genus Eriachaenium would find a different disposition and Cabrera (1971) in his recent treatment of the Compositae of Patagonia places the genus in the Inuleae. No explanation is given by Cabrera and the origin of the idea has not been found in this study. Certain characters of the genus such as the caudate anthers and woolly pubescence of the leaves and flowers do give credence to this relationship. The long corolla lobes of the disk flowers, the lack of very long exothecial cells, and the presence of much thickened inward curved anther appendages are alone only sufficient to raise doubts. The very short style branches with their more papillose abaxial surfaces are very difficult to interpret. It is the pollen that most completely indicates a better relationship for Eriachaenium. The grains are ellipsoidal, smooth and with internal columnar structure of the exine that is visible under the high power of the compound microscope. Such grains are unlike anything in the Calenduleae or Inuleae but are precisely the unique type found in many members of the large mostly South American tribe Mutisieae. This latter tribe also has caudate anther bases and often woolly pubescence, and here the indurated incurved anther appendages are appropriate though very short for the tribe.

Literature Cited

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Robinson, Harold Ernest and Brettell, R. D. 1973. "TRIBAL REVISIONS IN THE ASTERACEAE PART 6 THE RELATIONSHIP OF ERIACHAENIUM." *Phytologia* 26, 71–72.

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