

A NEW NYMPHAEA VARIETY DISCOVERED IN SOUTH CENTRAL AFRICA

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During early 1982, upon completion of documentary and field studies in an around the Okavango River Delta, Botswana, Africa, the author encountered a previously unnamed Nymphaea taxon of the subgenus Brachyceras. While other known taxa are abundant in the region, this new variety, here named N. capensis var. alba is indeed a significant find. The overall plant structure falls between N. capensis var. capensis and the var. zanzibariensis Casp. While possessing characteristics of both taxa, it is more like the latter in overall habit. Flowers of var. alba are pure white, very fragrant, and closely resemble those of the var. zanzibariensis. Floating leaves, while slightly smaller in size, possess the characteristics of var. capensis, especially the typical maroon blotches that appear on juvenile leaves and which fade completely as the leaf matures. Also, marginal indentations closely resemble var. capensis.

Nymphaea capensis Thunb. var. alba K. Landon, var. nov.

Varietate capensis accedens sed floribus albis fragrantissimis, foliis immaturis nigroviridis purpureomaculatisque, foliis maturis supra viridis subtus purpurascens, in horto autofertilibus et veroprogenerantibus.

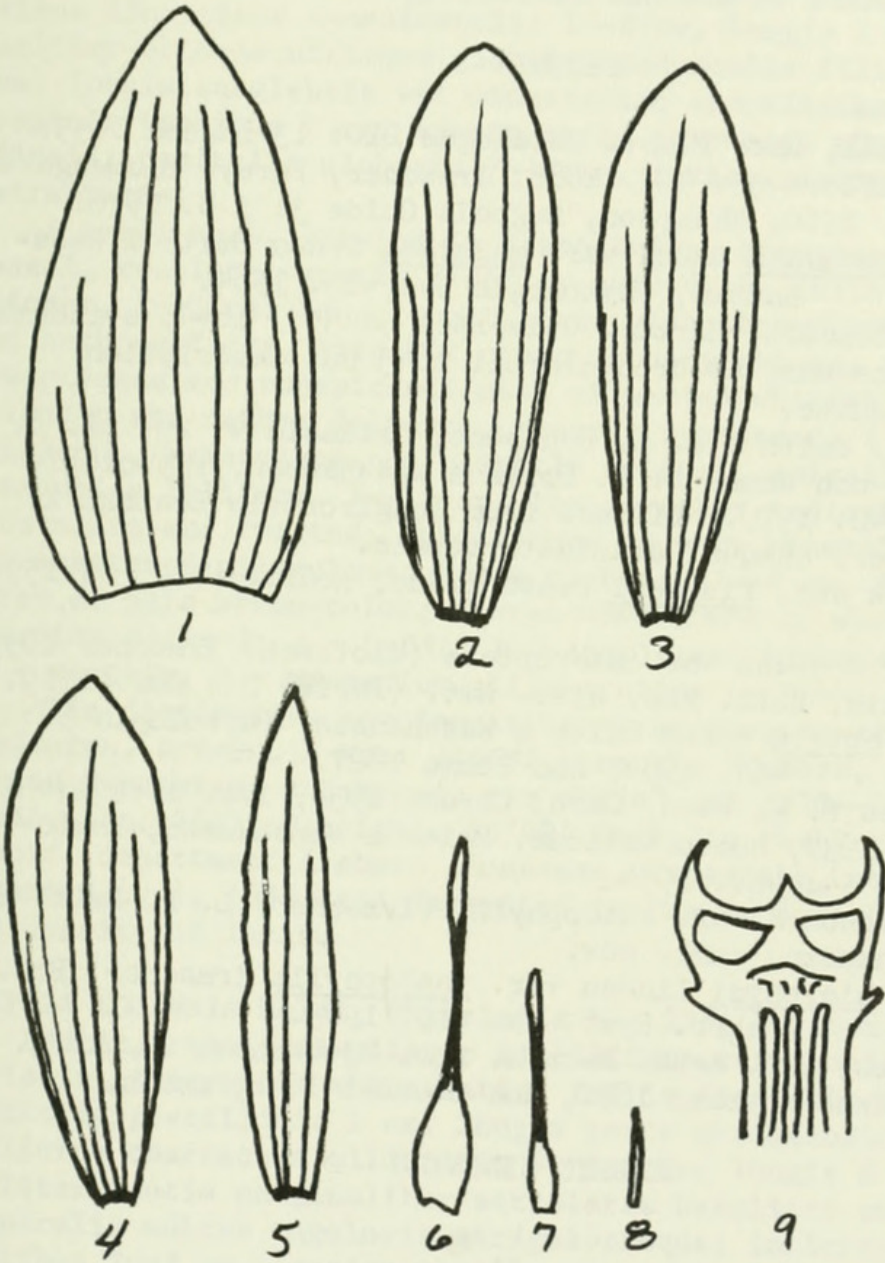
HOLOTYPE (TEX): Grown from stock secured from swamps of the Okavango River Delta, Kalahari Desert (Ngamiland) Botswana, Africa. 17 Oct 1983, K.C. LANDON s.n.

DESCRIPTION. Flowers averaging 12 cm across, opening 3 to 4 successive days from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; highly fragrant. BUD...rather broad, oblong-ovate, obtuse or rounded at apex. PEDUNCLE...terete, stout, rising 10 to 20 cm, above the water's surface; light to olive green with light purplish pigment visible beneath epidermis, the six main air canals in the center surrounded by 12 secondary canals followed by 24 smaller outer canals. RECEPTACLES...10 to 15 mm long, yellow, changing to green after submerging. SEPALS...4, oblong-ovate, ca. 7 cm long, ca. 4 cm wide; opening 15 to 20 degrees above horizontal; margins gently curved toward apex; outer surface pure green, having no lines or dots but possessing a 3 mm border (average) of white sometimes suffused with maroon; inner surface pure white; posterior sepal narrowest; anterior broadest; primary veins 5 with 2 additional slender nerves. PETALS...ca. 28; all pure white; linear-ovate, the outermost petals obtuse, tapering toward the base, concave within; ca. 24 cm long, ca. 7 cm wide, longer than the sepals in length and not entirely covered by them from 1 to 2 days prior to initial anthesis; the outer 4 stand in a whorl alternate with the

sepals, all or 2 sometimes sepaloid on back just above the base extending upwards approximately half the length. Second whorl consisting of 8 smaller petals, alternate by twos with the sepals. A third whorl of 8 to 12 smaller petals alternates with the second. A few petals of a fourth whorl alternate with the third. All petals except those of the fourth whorl are 5 to 7 nerved. STAMENS...ca. 200, the outermost about $3/4$ to $1/2$ as long as the petals; anthers all longer than the filaments; appendages acicular-lanceolate; appendages always white like the petals; filaments yellow throughout; backs of outer anthers shading from white to yellow at the base. CARPELS...ca. 25, yellow, distinct from one another; stigmatic over all their upper surfaces; styles triangular. Stigmatic basin moderately concave as evidenced by carpellary styles curving upward and rising approximately 7 mm above axile process; axillary process conical, yellow translucent. FRUIT...depressed spheroidal, 5 to 6 cm in diameter, crowned with obtuse incurved styles; stigma concave; ovules small. SEED...ellipsoidal to nearly globose, ca. 1.6 x 1.0 mm.; acuminate at hilum, dull dark olive-brown; germination immediate, ca. 10 days upon submerging or after drying off. LEAF...(first floating) green above bloched with maroon; purple beneath; coriaceous, obicular-ovate; margin slightly wavy in lower half; rounded at apex; sinus deep; margins convex; angles obtuse or subacute. LEAF...(of mature plant) narrowly peltate; ca. 25 cm wide and 27 cm long; texture firm; sinuate-dentate; teeth mostly rounded, sometimes angular and obtuse, depressions between teeth 1 to 5 cm.. deep; apex of leaf rounded, slightly retuse; upper surface bright green; depressed-veiny; maroon bloched when young; bloches fading to pure green upon maturity; undersurface suffused violet or even dark purple; veins green, prominent; primary nerves ca. 10 on each side; sinus depth 10 to 15 cm, margins entire, convex, overlapping above, diverging toward periphery; angles pronounced, acuminate. PETIOLE...smooth, terete, dark green, sometimes with purplish pigment visible through and beneath epidermis; 5 to 10 cm in diameter, 60 to 150 cm long. RHIZOME (TUBER)...ovoid; smaller ones distinctly egg-shaped, varying in size from 10 to 20 mm in diameter; contracted above; apex clothed with long silky hairs, the vegetive bud arising from central portion of apex and surrounded by prominent dead leaf bases; basal portion of tuber smooth; larger rhizomes of rough texture being completely covered with leaf and peduncular scars throughout outer surface.

Distribution: Indigenous to and around the Okavango Delta swamps, Kalahari Desert (Ngamiland), Botswana, Africa.

Nymphaea capensis var. alba. Landon.



1, Anterior sepal, 2,3,4,5, petals, 6,7,8, stamens, all in successive series. 9, cross-section of ovary.



Landon, Kenneth C . 1984. "A new *Nymphaea* variety discovered in south central Africa." *Phytologia* 55(2), 109–111.

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