

The silver ghost of Serra do Lenheiro: *Dyckia mezii*, *nom. nov.* (Bromeliaceae)

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Dyckia mezii Krapp *nom. nov.* replaces *D. argentea* Mez 1894, which is a younger homonym of *D. argentea* G. Nicholson 1885 and therefore an illegitimate name.

Dyckia mezii* Krapp, *nom. nov.

BASIONYM: *Dyckia argentea* Mez in Martius, *Fl. Bras.* 3(3): 492–493, 1894, *nom. illeg.* (ICBN Art. 53.1), non *D. argentea* G. Nicholson, *Ill. Dict. Gard.* 1: 497, 1885.

ETYMOLOGY. The specific epithet *mezii* is to honour Carl Christian Mez (1866–1944), who contributed in an exceptional way to the understanding of the difficult genus *Dyckia*.

Amongst the about 150 often narrowly endemic species of *Dyckia* a large number is only known from the type locality (Smith & Downs 1974). Furthermore, many species are lost and have probably gone extinct since the collection of the type specimens. Also, taking into account the extreme difficulties of delimiting *Dyckia* species against each other, and the variegated taxonomic history of the genus, it is remarkable that only one single illegitimate name exists to date that is still used for a distinct species.

In 1894, Carl Christian Mez published the taxon *D. argentea* Mez (Martius, *Fl. Bras.* 3(3): 492–493) and produced an illegitimate name (ICBN Art. 53.1 in McNeill *et al.* 2006), that is still used today. Nine years before, in 1885, Nicholson published this name for a different species *D. argentea* G. Nicholson (*Ill. Dict. Gard.*

1: 497, 1885). Some authors treat *D. argentea* G. Nicholson as a combination for *Hechtia argentea* Baker (*Bot. Mag.* 107: tab. 6554 (*nomen*), 1881; and in Hemsl. *Biol. Centr. Amer. Bot.* 3: 317–318, 1884), but this is unwarranted since Nicholson treated the two names as two completely independent taxa (*Ill. Dict. Gard.* vol. 1: 497, 1885; vol. 2: 119–120, 1885). Since the last Bromeliaceae treatment by Mez (1935) *D. argentea* G. Nicholson is commonly treated as a synonym of *H. argentea* Baker (e.g. Smith & Downs 1974, Govaerts 2012). A type for *D. argentea* G. Nicholson was not defined and the scant description only of vegetative features given by Nicholson leaves it unclear what kind of a plant was the basis for the description. Hence the treatment as a synonym of *H. argentea* Baker remains dubious.

The diagnosis Mez (1935) published for his *D. argentea* is based on a plant collected near São João del Rei in the Serra do Lenheiro (Minas Gerais, Brazil) in 1888 (*Glaziou 17280-A*, lectotype B, F (photo), isolectotype B). From this locality one additional collection from the same time exists (syntypes: *Glaziou 17279*, C, K, P). Since then the species has never been collected, but it is commonly accepted as a distinct species (e.g. Smith & Downs 1974, Luther 2008).

Similar plants found in later times are distinct enough from *D. argentea* Mez to merit the status of a separate species (Braun *et al.* 2008, Leme *et al.* 2012). Today the species is often referred to as “mythical” or “legendary”. In fact it seems to be extinct, which may have been the fate of some other species of *Dyckia* as well.

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