VAILIA ANOMALA, A NEW NAME FOR BLEPHARODON MUCRONATUM (APOCYNACEAE, ASCLEPIADOIDEAE)

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ABSTRACT

The common Mesoamerican species Blepharodon mucronatum (Schltdl.) Decne. is transferred to the genus Vailia Rusby. Since Vailia mucronata Rusby precludes that epithet, the next available name results in the combination Vailia anomala (Brandegee) W.D. Stevens, comb. nov.

Blepharodon Decne. was originally described with nine species, including B. mucronatum, (Decaisne, 1844) and was lectotypified with B. lineare (Decne.) Decne. by Fournier (1885). The genus has been twice reviewed (Fontella & Marquete, 1973; Morillo, 1976) and with gradual additions now comprises about 66 published names and perhaps 15–20 recognizable species, all South American except Blepharodon mucronatum, which ranges from central Mexico to northern South America. Morillo (1976) excluded Blepharodon mucronatum from the genus: “My definition of Blepharodon eliminates B. mucronatum as a member of the genus. Blepharodon mucronatum differs from Blepharodon (as defined here) by its vesicular corona segments and its stipitate gynostegium.” However, Morillo did not suggest another name for the species and floristic treatments have only used the name in Blepharodon (e.g. Balick et al. 2000; Molina, 1975; Spellman, 1975; Standley & Williams, 1969; Stevens, 2001, 2009).

Molecular studies have, to date, too poorly sampled the species of Blepharodon to offer any guidance for the proper placement of B. mucronatum. However, it seems from those molecular studies (Liede, 2005, 2013; Rapini et al. 2003, 2006) that Blepharodon is not monophyletic, with two species, B. lineare and B. ampliflorum E. Fourn., standing well apart from the remaining species. In his review, Morillo (1976) divided the genus into two (unpublished) morphological subgenera, with Blepharodon lineare representing the type subgenus and B. ampliflorum as a synonym of B. lineare. Besides the list of floral differences described by Morillo (1976), these plants are the only erect (non-twining) species of the genus and have strikingly large flowers. Earlier, Woodson (1941) had reached the same conclusion: “The nine species assigned to Blepharodon by Decaisne fall into two groups superficially marked by volubile or erect herbaceous habits, but accompanied by interesting differences in the corona and pollinia as well.” Woodson went on to ineffectively typify the genus with the twining species. Standley & Williams (1969) made a similar observation: “Decaisne’s generic description seems to be based on a mixture of two genera. We accept the name based on B. mucronatum.”

The only generic synonym of the current circumscription of Blepharodon is Vailia Rusby, described with the single species V. mucronata Rusby. Morillo (1997) added Vailia salicina (Decne.) Morillo, based on Blepharodon salicinum Decne., and considered V. mucronata to be a synonym of that name. Morillo further suggested that Vailia belonged in the tribe Marsdeniae rather than the Asclepiadeae, because of the erect pollinia. The pollinium position is actually ambiguous and Liede (1996), Goyder (2009), and Endress et al. (2014) have maintained the species as Blepharodon in the Asclepiadeae.
It seems clear that in the future *Blepharodon* will be restricted to the two southern South American erect species, *B. lineare* and *B. ampliflorum*, and that the Mesoamerican species needs a new name. It is not yet clear whether *Vailia* can accommodate species with both short, erectish pollinia and long pendent pollinia, as well as with both vesicular and laminar corona lobes. My best guess is that this expanded concept of *Vailia* will survive, and I have chosen to place the Mesoamerican species there.


Figure 1. Flower of *Vailia anomala* with white, vesicular corona lobes. Stevens 27809. Photo: O.M. Montiel.
Figure 2. Lateral view of flowers of *Vaillia anomala* with white, vesicular corona lobes. *Stevens 28310*. Photo: O.M. Montiel.

Figure 3. Flowering shoot of *Blepharodon lineare*, type species of the genus. *Fuentes 5731*. Photo: A.F. Fuentes C.
Figure 4. Flower of *Blepharodon amazonicum* (Benth.) Fontella & Marquete, a typical non-type *Blepharodon* with laminar corona lobes. *Van der Werff et al. 24571*. Photo: R. Rojas.

**LITERATURE CITED**


