NOMENCLATURAL NOTES ON CYPERUS RETRORSUS CHAPM. AND “CYPERUS RETROVERSUS CHAPM.” (CYPERACEAE), INCLUDING A LECTOTYPIFICATION

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Abstract. Cyperus retrorsus Chapm. is common and widespread in the southeastern United States. Although authors have indicated the existence of types at NY and US, none has ever been specifically designated as such. A lectotype at US and an isolecotype at NY are herein designated, and ambiguity resulting from A.W. Chapman’s use of both C. retrorsus and “C. retroversus” for the same species is discussed.

Keywords: nomenclature, typification, lectotype, Cyperus retrorsus, “Cyperus retroversus”, A.W. Chapman.

Cyperus retrorsus Chapm. (Cyperaceae) is widespread in the southeastern United States and was first described by A.W. Chapman in 1878. Since no type specimen designated by Chapman has been found and none has been specifically designated as typ by subsequent workers, my primary purpose herein is to lectotypify C. retrorsus Chapm. Secondly, an ambiguous reference by Chapman (1883) to “C. retroversus” is clarified.

Lectotypification of Cyperus retrorsus Chapm.

The application of C. retrorsus, which has been consistently used (e.g., Small 1903, 1933; Kükenthal 1935–1936; Horvat 1941; Fernald 1950; Gleason & Cronquist 1963, 1991; Radford et al. 1968; Long & Lakela 1971; Godfrey & Wooten 1979; Wunderlin 1982, 1998; Clewell 1985; Diggs et al. 1999; Tucker et al. 2002) for a common, widespread species in the southeastern United States, is not in question. Although no specimen with data matching those cited by Horvat (1941) or one annotated as the type has been located at US, a specimen from Chapman’s herbarium has been found at US that can be linked with the NY fragment cited by Fer-

I am grateful to Dr. D.H. Nicolson for providing helpful comments on an earlier version of the manuscript, to Dr. M.T. Strong and Dr. T.S. Cochrane for responding to queries about type materials at US and WIS respectively, to Dr. K.J. Wurdack for sharing unpublished information on A.W. Chapman’s travels and collections, and to the Faculty Research Fund of Valdosta State University for supporting travel to the U.S. National Herbarium. Constructive reviews by Dr. F.R. Barrie and Dr. G. Moore are gratefully acknowledged.

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nald and Griscom (1935). This specimen was probably made during October and November 1875 when Chapman went to southern Florida and the Keys to collect wood samples for the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia (K.J. Wurdack, personal communication). The sheet at US bears a single plant from which the two longest rays have been removed and mounted in approximate position above the rest of the inflorescence. A close examination of this specimen reveals three empty primary prophylls. Two of the empty prophylls undoubtedly correspond with the disarticulated and re-positioned rays mounted with the specimen. The third empty prophyll suggests yet a third ray is missing from the specimen. The label data with the US specimen are minimal and, unfortunately, Chapman named the plant “Cyperus retrorsus, Chapm.”

The fragment at NY matches the spikes and spikelets on the aforementioned specimen from Chapman’s herbarium, now at US, and most likely originated from its third empty prophyll. If one assumes the fragment at NY originated from the Herb. Chapman specimen at US, then both specimens are clearly tied to the protologue of C. retrorsus Chapm. and are parts of a single gathering. In the absence of an unambiguous published reference to a particular type specimen at US or an annotation designating a type by Horvat (1941), it seems prudent to choose a lectotype here. Thus, the US specimen is chosen herein as the lectotype, and the subsidiary fragment at NY an isolecotype.

**Cyperus retrorsus** Chapm., Bot. Gaz. (Crawfordsville) 3:17. 1878. Marisus retrorsus (Chapm.) C.B. Clarke, Kew Bull. 8:15. 1908.—

**Type:** U.S.A. Florida: South Florida, [Robert’s] Key, Caximbas Bay, [Oct.-Nov. 1875], Herb. Chapman s.n. (LECTOTYPE: US!, herein designated; ISOLECTOTYPE: NY!).

**What is “Cyperus retrorsus”?**

Inexplicably, in the second edition of his Flora of the Southern United States Chapman (1883) omitted any reference to C. retrorsus but, apparently in place of it, did cite (suppl., p. 659) a different name “C. retrorsus Chapm.” with an expanded description essentially similar to the original one he provided for C. retrorsus in 1878. Moreover, Chapman (1883:659) cited “Robert’s Key, Caximbas Bay, South Florida” as the locality for “C. retrorsus”, which is the type locality of C. retrorsus (Chapman 1878). In the third edition (1897) Chapman re-verted to C. retrorsus without citing “C. retrorsus”; thus, it seems clear that he mistakenly used “C. retrorsus” instead of C. retrorsus in the second edition (1883) of his Flora. Fernald and Griscom (1935:152) and Horvat (1941:83) dismissed “C. retrorsus Chapm.” as an erroneous citation (“lapsus”), and Merrill (1948:67) “suspected that the entry...was due to a lapsus calami on the part of Chapman.” Such a mistake is correctable as a confusingly similar name under Article 61 of the ICBN (McNeill et al. 2006), and, since the type locality cited for both names is identical and the descriptions are essentially the same, it can be assumed that both C. retrorsus and “C. retrorsus” are based on the same type. Under Art. 61.5, confusingly similar names based on the same type are treated as orthographical variants. Thus, since C. retrorsus is the name originally used by Chapman (1878), it is the valid one for the species (McNeill et al. 2006).

**Literature Cited**


Chapman, A.W. 1878. An enumeration of some plants—chiefly from the semi-tropical regions of Florida— which are either new, or which have not hitherto been recorded as belonging to the flora of the southern states. Bot. Gaz. (Crawfordsville) 3:2–6, 9–12, 17–21.


Carter, Nomenclatural notes on Cyperus


