A REDUCTION OF *PTEROBESLERIA* TO *BESLERIA* (GESNERIACEAE)

*Hans Wiehler**

The genus *Pterobesleria* Morton, published in 1953, contains two species, both native to Venezuela. *Besleria* L. is a genus of over 200 species distributed throughout the neotropics. Conrad Morton's revision of this largest taxon among the American Gesneriaceae, published in 1939, is still a very useful reference, for *Besleria* is a well-defined and natural entity. There are very few species in this group with "aberrant" features or special developments, such as the reduced nectary in *Besleria comosa* Morton, or the cone-shaped berry fruit in *B. labiosa* Hanstein.

Morton based *Pterobesleria* on a single character, the occurrence of wings on the calyx lobes. The two species of *Pterobesleria*, *P. rosea* Morton and *P. aristeguietae* Morton, agree in all other aspects with *Besleria*. A consideration of generic limits in the neotropical Gesneriaceae (Wiehler, 1979) indicates that this difference in the shape of the calyx lobes falls easily within the acceptable range of variation of floral shapes in *Besleria* and in the neotropical Gesneriaceae.

It is of interest to note that Morton commented in the article in which he established the genus *Pterobesleria* on the possible segregation of the *Gasteranthus* Bentham complex from *Besleria*. Through a study of live material it has now become clear that *Gasteranthus* differs in the type of fruit (capsule versus berry) and in the arrangement of stomates on the leaf from *Besleria*. These are vital generic characters in the Gesneriaceae, and thus *Gasteranthus*, now a group of over 40 species, was recently re-established as a genus (Wiehler, 1975).

The two species of *Pterobesleria* are probably not closely related, because they differ in their inflorescence structure (pedunculate versus epedunculate), indicating that perhaps the winged calyx lobes arose independently within *Besleria*. In Morton's key of 1939, *B. rosea* fits into section *Besleria*, subsection *Elongatae* Morton, and *B. aristeguitae* into subsection *Confertae* Morton of the same section. (The removal of *Gasteranthus* has caused an imbalance in the sectional arrangement of *Besleria*, leaving only a total of 14 species in two sections. The remainder of this large genus is in the type section which contains eight subsections. A revaluation of sectional characters and the description of new species will precede a future sectional re-organization of *Besleria*).

Besleria L., Species Plantarum 619, 1753; Genera plantarum (ed. 1) 181, 1737; (ed. 5) 271, 1754.

Eriphia P. Browne, The Civil and Natural History of Jamaica 270. 1756.
Type: *E. jamaicensis* Roem. & Schult. (= *Besleria lutea* L.)

Cyrtanthemum Oersted, Centralamericas Gesneraceer 56. 1858
Lectotype: *C. hirsutum* Oersted (=*B. cyrtanthemum* Hanst.)

Gasteranthopsis Oersted, *op. cit.* 55.
Lectotype: *G. glabra* Oersted [=*B. glabra* (Oersted) Hanst.]

Parabesleria Oersted, *op. cit.* 52
Lectotype: *P. triflora* Oersted [=*B. triflora* (Oersted) Hanst.]

Pseudobesleria Oersted, *op. cit.* 54
(No species of *Besleria* were transferred to *P.* by Oersted, or subsequently).

*The Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, 800 South Palm Avenue, Sarasota Florida 33577, U.S.A.

Pterobesleria Morton, Fieldiana, Bot. 28: 532. 1953.
Type: *P. rosea* Morton

Besleria aristeguitae (Morton) Wiehler, comb. nov.
Pterobesleria aristequitae Morton, Bol. Soc. Venez. Ci. Nat. 26 (109): 156-158, 1965.

Besleria rosea (Morton) Wiehler, comb. nov.
Pterobesleria rosea Morton, Fieldiana, Bot. 28: 533. 1953.

The lectotypes for some of the above synonyms of *Besleria* were chosen by Morton & Denham (1972).

LITERATURE CITED

Morton, C. V. 1939. A revision of *Besleria*. Contr. U. S. Nat. Herb. 26(9):395-474.

Morton, C. V. & D. Denham 1972. Lectotypifications of some generic names of Gesneriaceae. Taxon 21(5-6):669-678.

Wiehler, H. 1975. *Besleria* L. and the re-establishment of *Gasteranthus* Benth. (Gesneriaceae). Selbyana 1(2):150-156.

_____. 1979. Generic delimitation in a new classification of the neotropical Gesneriaceae. xvi + 405 pp. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Miami, Miami, Florida.

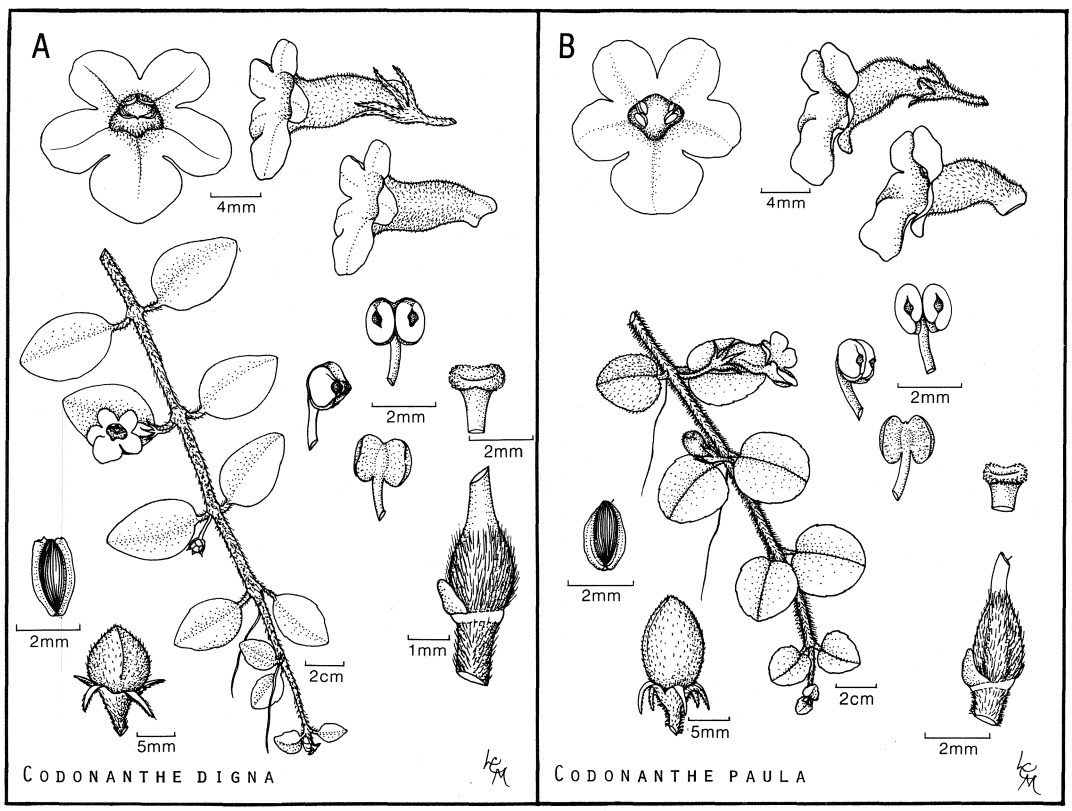

PLATE 1