

BATACEAE

by

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Dioecious, branched undershrubs; branches opposite, 4-angular, herbaceous, afterwards becoming terete and woody. Leaves opposite, simple, sessile. Stipules wanting. Male inflorescence catkinlike, axillary. Bracts in 4 rows, imbricate, persistent, slightly peltate. Flowers with a cuplike, bilabiate perianth. Staminodes 4. Stamens 4, alternating with the staminodes; filaments distinct; anthers versatile, with longitudinal dehiscence. Rudiment of ovary sometimes present. Female inflorescence more or less conical. Bracts in 4 rows, not imbricate, deciduous, slightly peltate. Flowers naked. Ovary 4-locular, sessile to short-stipitate; style very short; stigma bilobed. Ovules solitary in each locule, basifixed, anatropous. Disk wanting. Fruit baccate, crowned by the persistent stigma. Seed erect, club-shaped, slightly curved. Endosperm wanting.

Two species in one genus; one species mainly in tropical America, the other one in New Guinea.

Batis P. Browne, Nat. Hist. Jamaica 357. 1756

Characters and distribution as the family.

Batis maritima L.

LINNAEUS, Syst. Nat. ed. 10. 1289. 1759; GRISEBACH, Fl. Br. W. Ind. Isl. 61. 1859 [1864]; DUSS, Fl. phan. Ant. franç. 52. 1897; URBAN, Symb. Ant. 4: 227. 1905; BOLDINGH, Fl. D.W. Ind. Isl. I: 47. 1909; JOHNSTON, Proc. Bost. Soc. Nat. Hist. 34(7): 208. 1909; BOLDINGH, Fl. Ned. W. Ind. Eil. 184. 1913; Fl. D.W. Ind. Isl. 2: 28. 1914; FAWCETT & RENDLE, Fl. Jamaica 3(1): 35, fig. 7. 1914; BRITTON & MILLSAUGH, Bahama Fl. 133. 1920; URBAN, Symb. Ant. 8: 213. 1920; BRITTON & WILSON, Sci. Surv. Porto Rico & Virgin Isl. 5: 290. 1924; QUESTEL, Fl. Isl. St. Bartholomew 104. 1941; LEON & ALAIN, Fl. Cuba 2: 33, fig. 8. 1951; ARNOLDO, Zakflora 113, fig. 131. 1954; Zakflora 91,

fig. 131. 1964; SIMMONDS, in *Fl. Trinidad & Tobago* 2: 480. 1964; ADAMS, *Flowering plants of Jamaica* 253. 1972; FOURNET, *Fl. Guadeloupe & Martinique* 954, fig. 457. 1978.

Glabrous, greyish-yellow undershrub; stems spreading or prostrate; branches erect. Leaves entire, fleshy, linear to linear-oblong, semiterete, obtuse or subacute at the apex, contracted at the base, up to 30×2 mm. Male inflorescence bracteate; bracts fleshy in the centre, membranaceous at the margin, orbicular, rounded at the apex, more or less cordate at the base, 1.5×2 mm. Flowers with perianth 1.5 mm long, cup-shaped, transversely bilabiate above the middle; tubular part about 1 mm long, membranaceous; anterior lip smaller, truncate, membranaceous; posterior lip larger, broadly ovate, obtuse at the apex with a swollen zone near and parallel to the margin. Staminodes more or less unequal, clawed, the limbs rhomboid, 0.5—0.8 mm long, acute and as long as the claw. Stamens exerted; filaments rather thick, 2 mm long; anthers about 1 mm long. Female inflorescence: bracts fleshy in the centre, membranaceous at the margin, triangular to broadly ovate, acute or apiculate at the apex, 2×1.5 mm. Flowers connate, the two uppermost ovaries often sterile; ovary ovoid-oblong, 1 mm long; stigma subsessile, bilobate, the greater part of the lobes deciduous. Fruits green and united into a conical, fleshy, up to 3 cm long mass, and crowned by the cushion-shaped, persistent part of the stigma. Seeds about 2.5 mm long.

West Indies, tropical and subtropical continental America and adjacent islands; from North Carolina to Brazil on the Atlantic coast and from California to Ecuador and Brazil on the Pacific coast, Galápagos Islands, and Hawaiian Islands.

Saline soil along the coasts and salinas.

Vernacular names: banana di rif (Leeward Group).
wild banana (Windward Group).

ARUBA: Palm Beach (Arnoldo 320, fr. Dec.); seashore near Belashi (Boldingh 6439, st. Jan.); salina west of Tibushi (Stoffers 1348, st. Jan.); along the coast near Oranjestad (Stoffers 2114, fem. fl. Feb.); dubious loc.: Seroe Blancu (Boldingh 6509, st. Jan.).

BONAIRE: seashore between Tolo and Kralendijk (Boldingh 7442, st. Feb.); Lac (Stoffers 938, fr. Dec.).

CURAÇAO: Rif (Arnoldo 1988, male fl. Oct.; Suringar s.n., male fl. March); seashore of Bullen Baai (Stoffers 378, male fl. Oct.); Santa Marta Baai (de Wilde 126A, male fl. Ap. [L]); Lagoen Labadera (Suringar s.n., male fl. March [L]); Willemstad (Britton & Shafer 2927, male fl. March).

ST. MARTIN: Great Salt Pond (Hummelinck S42, fl. & fr. May); Kanaal Rolandus (Stoffers 2245A, male fl. March; 2245B, fem. fl. & fr. March); between Simson Bay and Simson Bay Lagoon (Stoffers 2500, fem. fl. March; 2509, male fl. March); near Philipsburg (Boldingh 2338, fem. fl. Aug.); Fort Amsterdam (Suringar s.n., male fl. [L]).