

**FICUS CORNERIANA, A NEW SPECIES OF  
FICUS SUBG. SYCIDIUM SECT. PALAEOMORPHE (MORACEAE)  
FROM THE SOLOMON ISLANDS**

C.C. BERG

The Norwegian Arboretum/Botanical Institute, University of Bergen, 5259 Hjellevad, Norway

SUMMARY

A new species of *Ficus* subg. *Sycidium* sect. *Palaeomorphe*, *F. corneriana* C.C. Berg, is described.

**Key words:** *Ficus*, sect. *Palaeomorphe*, Solomon Islands, Moraceae.

INTRODUCTION

*Ficus* subg. *Sycidium* (Miq.) Mildbr. & Burret (as section in Corner's classification; Corner, 1960: 443; 1965: 62) comprises c. 105 species and has a range of distribution from West Africa and Madagascar to Australia, New Caledonia and Samoa. It is represented by c. 30 species in the Pacific region, most of them belonging to sect. *Sycidium* (subsection in Corner's classification; Corner 1960: 444; 1965: 62; 1967: 89), which is centred in the eastern Malesian–Pacific region, and four belong to sect. *Palaeomorphe* (subsection in Corner's classification; Corner, 1960: 446; 1965: 74; 1967: 110). The latter section is centred in the western Malesian region, and comprises species which can produce adventitious roots. Some of these species are often hemiepiphytic, and two of them, *F. tinctoria* G. Forst. and *F. virgata* Blume are also found in the Pacific region (Corner, 1967: 110, f. 36). The majority of the *Palaeomorphe* species are always or often climbers; four species occur in New Guinea, one of them, the very widespread *F. subulata* Blume, extends to the Solomon Islands (Corner, 1967: 113, f. 37), and *F. corneriana*, described below, is endemic to these islands.

***Ficus corneriana* C.C. Berg, *spec. nov.***

*Ficus subulatae* affinis e.g. in lamina pilis gaudenti, basi cordata distincta. — Typus: *R. Mauriasi et al. BSIP 9575* (holo L), Solomon Islands, SE Kolombangara, 28 May 1968.

Climbers. *Branchlets* drying pale brown. *Leafy twigs* 1.5–3 mm thick, ± compressed, sparsely to densely whitish puberulous to hirtellous, smooth; internodes solid. *Leaves* distichous; lamina oblong to subovate, (7–)12–25 by (3–)4–9 cm, ± asymmetric, at least at the base, subcoriaceous, apex acuminate, base inequilateral, (sub)cordate, margin ± revolute towards the base to plane; upper surface very sparsely puberulous on the midrib, glabrescent, lower surface puberulous to subhispid on the midrib, or also very sparsely so on the lateral veins, glabrescent, smooth or ± scabrous; cystoliths

only beneath; midrib slightly prominent above; lateral veins 10–18 pairs, the basal pair hardly different from the other lateral veins, unbranched or branched, 1 or 2 pairs of smaller lateral veins below the main basal pair, tertiary venation scalariform (or in smaller leaves to reticulate); waxy glands in the axils of both lateral veins, large, extending to the axils of the smaller lateral veins below the main ones; petiole 0.4–1.2 cm long, sparsely to densely white puberulous, epidermis flaking off; stipules amplexicaul, 0.8–1 cm long, glabrous, caducous; terminal bud not divaricate. *Figs* axillary, solitary or paired, or clustered on spurs, more commonly so on up to 1 cm long spurs below the leaves (to ramiflorous?), subsessile or with a peduncle up to 0.1 cm long; peduncular bracts 3, in whorl, c. 0.5–1 mm long; receptacle (sub)globose, when dry 0.4–0.7 cm diam., sparsely and minutely puberulous, smooth, with some or without lateral bracts, at maturity yellow, apex convex, ostiole c. 1.5 mm diam., slightly prominent. *Internal bristles* absent. *Tepals* whitish, glabrous. *Style* glabrous.

Distribution — Solomon Islands (Kolombangara and San Cristobal).

Habitat — Forest.

Vernacular names — Sirifena or (Fai) Sirifena (Kolombangara: Kwara'ae names).

Notes — 1. The material of this species is indicated on labels as climber, epiphytic climber, or epiphyte.

2. This species shows affinities to *F. subulata*, from which it is clearly distinct by the presence of indumentum on the lamina, the cordate base of the lamina, and the large waxy glandular spots extending beyond the axils of the main basal lateral veins. The (sterile) collection made by Corner, was identified as *F. virgata*, in spite of the conspicuous differences, such as in the base of the lamina, the presence of hairs on the lamina, and the absence of cystoliths in the lamina above (as noted on the label).

*Additional collections examined:*

SOLOMON ISLANDS: Kolombangara: Kokave Area, 9 Jan. 1968, *R. Mauriasi et al. BSIP 7559* (L). — SE Kolombangara: W of Vila River, 13 Dec. 1967, *R. Mauriasi et al. BSIP 8409* (L). — San Cristobal: Warahito/Pegato Camp, 30 July 1965 (st), *E.J.H. Corner 22* (L).

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author is indebted to Dr. J.F. Veldkamp (Leiden) for translating the diagnosis into Latin.

#### REFERENCES

- Corner, E.J.H. 1960. Taxonomic notes on *Ficus* Linn., Asia and Australasia. IV. Subgen. *Ficus* sect. *Sycidium* Miq. Gard. Bull. Straits Settlement. 17: 442–485.  
 Corner, E.J.H. 1965. Check-list of *Ficus* in Asia and Australasia with a key to identification. Gard. Bull. Straits Settlement. 21: 1–186.  
 Corner, E.J.H. 1967. *Ficus* in the Solomon Islands and its bearing on the Post-Jurassic history of Melanesia. Philos. Trans. B. 253: 23–159.