A new species of Hechtia (Bromeliaceae: Hechtioideae) from Hidalgo (Mexico)

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Abstract

We propose that two populations previously referred to Hechtia epigyna, from the Mexican state of Hidalgo, represent a new species. Plants from the Hidalgo populations share the inferior ovary with Hechtia epigyna, an unusual trait in the genus, but they differ in their growth pattern (central vs. lateral inflorescence), characters of the adaxial foliar surface, petal color, and fruit position during dehiscence. We also provide a clarification on the typification of Hechtia epigyna. An assessment of the conservation status of the new species, Hechtia deceptrix following IUCN criteria resulted as CR (Critically Endangered).

Key words: Epigynous flowers, growth pattern, Hechtia epigyna, Hidalgo, IUCN, Tamaulipas

Introduction

Hechtia Klotzsch (1835: 401) is represented in the Mexican State of Hidalgo by three species (Espejo et al. 2004), namely H. glomerata Zuccarini (1840: 240), H. lundelliorum Smith (1938: 97), and H. podantha Mez (1896: 549). A fourth species, H. lepidophylla Ramírez (2008: 65) also has been reported for Hidalgo. Hornung-Leoni & Ramírez-Morillo (in prep.) have records of three more species in this state and overall, here we report a total of eight Hechtia species for Hidalgo, including the new one described herein. Plants of some of these species form large colonies: H. podantha does around the capital city, Pachuca, and H. glomerata in areas such as the Biosphere Reserve Barranca de Metztitlán in the central-north portion of the state of Hidalgo.

Materials and methods

Field work was carried out in the state of Hidalgo, Mexico, where we collected plants of the new species from two populations identified as Hechtia epigyna Harms (1935: 532) by Espejo et al. (2010). We found pistillate plants in bloom at the Municipality of Atotonilco El Grande and staminate plants in bloom at Municipality of Cardonal; fruit features were studied on specimens deposited at Herbarium UAMIZ (López-Ferrari et al. 3311; Zamudio et al. 13866; Zamudio & Zamudio 14085). We based the description of the new entity on Espejo et al. (2010), and on our collections deposited at HGOM (Hornung et al. 1344, 1354). In order to circumscribe the new species, we carried out field work in Tamaulipas, Municipality of Jaumave, at Nogales at the type locality of H. epigyna where we collected plants in fruit and with old staminate inflorescences and live plants of both sexes to cultivate and obtain fresh flowering material; vouchers of these collections are deposited at Herbarium CICY (Ramírez et al. 1721, 1723). We also studied high resolution images of the two sheets labeled H. W. Viereck 81 collected in Jaumave, Tamaulipas on March 2, 1930, both deposited at Herbarium B (Röpert (ed.) 2000+ [continuously updated]), and examined two collections of the same species at GH. Members of the San Diego Bromeliad Society kindly provided images and flowers in spirit of H. epigyna. We measured dimensions and compare qualitative features across all the available specimens.
Hechtia epigyna was described in 1935 by Hermann August Theodor Harms, a German botanist associated with the Botanical Museum in Berlin. The original description includes characters of both staminate and pistillate flowers based on H. W. Viereck 81 (B!) from Jaumave, Tamaulipas, which consists of two sheets numbered I and II (Röpert (ed.) 2000+ [continuously updated]). The first sheet (B1003990477, marked I) has two mounted leaves and only (three) staminate inflorescences whereas the other (B1003990476, marked II) has also two leaves but both a staminate and a pistillate inflorescence. A fragment consisting of a few staminate and pistillate flowers was sent to Lyman Smith by Harms (Smith, 1937) and deposited at Herbarium GH (GH00275616). Here we reject the non-published lectotypification and isolectotypification by K. Burt-Utley as indicated on the sheets and agree with Espejo et al. (2010), who indicated that the type of H. epigyna (H. W. Viereck 81) consists of two sheets.

Taxonomy

Hechtia deceptrix I. Ramírez & Hornung, spec. nov. (Figs. 1,2,3, Table 1)

This new species shares with Hechtia epigyna the epigynous flowers but it differs in its larger overall vegetative size, in its strict symposium growth pattern with terminal inflorescence (vs. pseudomonopodial with lateral inflorescence), glabrous adaxial foliar surface (vs. white lepidote), green petals (vs. pink) in fresh flowers, and erect fruits (vs. pendulous).

TYPE:—MEXICO. Hidalgo: Municipio de Actopan, Puente de Dios, alrededores de Puente de Dios, 20°18’08’’N, 98°47’23’’W, matorral con Juniperus, Dasylirion y Brahea, sobre sustrato calizo, 1735 m elevation, 15 May 2008, López-Ferrari, Espejo & Zamudio 3309 ♂ (holotype UAMIZ!; isotype IEB!).

Plants lithophytic, rosettes caespitose, in general shape globose, 40–60 cm tall, 50–60 cm diameter, generally forming dense, small colonies of 2–3 rosettes, rarely clumps of 8–12 rosettes. Rhizomes large, 16–36 cm long, 22–34 mm diameter. Leaves 50–80 in number, flexible, central ones erect, basal ones slightly reflexed; sheaths broadly ovate, 4–6 × 4–5 cm, light brown, margins erose, densely white lepidote abaxially, lustrous and glabrous adaxially; blades narrowly triangular, attenuate, 26–40(–58) × 1–3(–4) cm, succulent, barely channeled in cross section, green, sometimes with purple spots at the apex or margins, densely white lepidote abaxially, white lepidote at base but glabrous and glossy adaxially, margin straight, armed; spines antorse, triangular, 1.5–2.5 mm long, 4–10 mm apart, light green or occasionally purple, with a short tuff of white trichomes at the axle of basal spines. Inflorescence central, erect, emerging from a mature rosette (strict symposium growth pattern, type SPP sensu Ramírez et al., 2014).

Staminate inflorescences usually a 1-divided panicle, sometimes the basal 2–4 branches with 1–2 secondary branches (then 2-divided), cylindrical, erect, 1.8–2.5 m long; peduncle terete, purple, pruinose, 0.8–1.2 m long, 10–16(–25) mm diameter at the base, much surpassing the rosette; internodes 4.1–8 cm long; peduncle bracts with triangular sheaths, 2.5–4 × 3–4 cm, light brown drying almost white, margins entire to erose, thin; blades triangular, long attenuate, slightly fimbriate, foliaceous, multinerved, 4–6 × 0.6–1.2 cm, spinose, green with purple spots, densely white lepidote abaxially, glabrate adaxially, exceeding internodes; main axis 1.8–2.2 m long, ca. 1 cm diameter, upwards to ca. 5 mm, terete, purple, internodes 3.5–6.5 cm long; primary bracts ovate-triangular, attenuate, 2.6–5.5 × 7–10 cm, spinose-dentate, green with purple spots, sparsely white-lepidote on both surfaces, multinerved, shorter than branches; branches ca. 30 in number, in an angle of 45° or less with the main axis, 4–17 cm long, 1.5–2 cm diameter, 28–38 flowers; rachis ca. 2 mm diameter, flattened at its base, drying light brown, glabrous, sterile basal portion 2.7–3 cm long, upward decreasing in length to be completely sessile; floral bracts ovate-elliptical, acute, 6–7 × 2.6–2.9 mm, membranous, green, brownish at the apex, margins erose and hyaline, glabrous, 1-nerved, falsely appearing, due to levels of insertion along the floral axis, to be shorter than sepals at anthesis. Flowers pedicellate, poystichous, divaricate, actinomorphic, erect; pedicels obconic, 4–5 mm long, ca. 1.5 mm diameter, slightly lepidote; sepals triangular, green, apically brownish, 3.5–3.8 × 1.8–2 mm, entire, glabrous, 3-nerved, shorter than petals; petals wide-elliptical, rounded, 4.2–4.5 × 3.3–3.5 mm, spreading in their apical half, light green, veins not visible; filaments triangular, flattened, 1.9–3.5 mm long, white; anthers oblong, ca. 0.9–1.5 mm long, dorsifixed, green, pollen yellow; pistillode reduced, greenish-white, stigmatic lobes much reduced.
**Pistillate inflorescences** a 1-divided panicle, sometimes 1–2 of them with 1 secondary branch (then 2-divided), cylindrical, erect, 1.7–2 m long; **peduncle** terete, 85–100 cm long. 1.6–2 cm diameter at the base, much higher than rosette and as long as the main axis, purple, pruinose, internodes 5–7.5 cm long; **peduncle bracts** with triangular sheath, 2.5–4 × 3–4 cm, green with purple spots, drying light brown, margins entire to erose, thin; **blade** triangular, long attenuate, slightly pungent, foliaceous, multinierved, 7–9 × 0.6–1 cm, spinose, green with purple spots, densely white lepidote abaxially, glabrate adaxially, longer than internodes; **main axis** 85–100 cm long, ca. 1 cm diameter at the base, terete, purple, internodes 5–6.5 cm long; **primary bracts** narrowly ovate-triangular, attenuate, (1–)2.6–5.5 × 0.5–1 cm, as long or shorter than the sterile portion of the branch, spino-se dentate, green with purple spots, apex brownish, margin erose, hyaline; **branches** 7–16 in number, stipitate, forming an angle of ca. 45° with the main axis, 5–14 cm long, (2–)4–5 cm diameter cylindrical, with 18–40 flowers; basal sterile portion ca. 1.5 cm long decreasing in length to be completely lacking at distal end of inflorescence, dorsi ven trally flattened; **rachis** ribbed, glabrous, green with purple hues; **floral bracts** ovate-elliptical, acute, ca. 8 × 4–5 mm, margin erose, hyaline, green, as long as the ovary. **Flowers** almost sessile, erect; **pedicel** ribbed, less than 1 mm long, ca. 0.5 mm diameter, sespal triangular, acute, 4–5 × 2–2.5 mm, green, entire, glabrous, 1-nerved; **petals** elliptic, rounded, cucullate at apex, 4–5.2 × 2–2.8 mm, entire, green; **staminodes** six, triangular, laminar, 1.6–1.9 mm long, white; ovary inferior, oblongoid to ellipsoid, 5–7 mm long, 2–3 mm diameter, green, slightly lepidote, stigmatic lobes recurved, 2–3.5 mm long, adnate at their bases, white, falsely appearing, due to level of insertion along the floral axis, to be as long as the petals at anthesis; placentation central, ovules white-greenish. **Fruits** ellipsoid, sessile, 10–14 mm long, 4–4.5 mm diameter, glabrous, erect, and brown when mature; **seeds** fusiform, brown to reddish brown, reticulate, ca. 3 mm long, 1 mm diameter, with a lateral wing ending in two caudae, these hyaline.

**Habitat & Distribution:** — _Hechtia deceptrix_ occurs in Rio Amajac basin in the Municipality of Atotonilco El Grande, limiting with the municipalities of Actopan and Cardonal, in the central portion of Hidalgo. Plants of the new species form small (2–3 rosettes) to rarely large (8–12 rosettes, Figure 2A) colonies on limestone cliffs at 1700–1800 m of elevation. These localities are part of the strip of submontane scrub that extends from Jacala and Pacula in the northwestern portion of Hidalgo, to the southeast into the region of Santa María Amajac, in the physiographic subprovince of Carso Huasteco in the Sierra Madre Oriental Province (Anonymous, 1992). Locally, _H. deceptrix_ is associated with other rosetofilous plants such as _Agave celsii_ Hooker (1856: 14934), _Agave striata_ Zuccarini (1833: 678), _A. xylonacantha_ Salm-Reifferscheid-Dyck (1859: 92), _Dasylirion longissimum_ Lemaire (1856: 91), _H. glomerata_, _Tillandsia albida_ Mez & Purpus, in Mez (1916: 248), and _T. grandis_ Schlendrechtal (1845: 424), among other typical elements of these particular dry forests. The population at Puente de Dios is located at the limit of the Faja Volcánica Transmexicana Province in a transition to a forest of _Juniperus flaccida_ Schlendrechtal (1838: 495), together with _Brahea berlandieri_ Bartlett (1935: 31).

In contrast, the only known population of _Hechtia epigyna_ is located in the subprovince of the Gran Sierra Plegada in the state of Tamaulipas in the Sierra Madre Oriental Province, at lower elevation (585–612 m) in submontane scrub vegetation with a different floristic composition (Puig, 1991). At the type locality, _H. epigyna_ grows on vertical karstic walls with northern exposure, forming dense colonies of several rosettes (4–12) along with _Brahea berlandieri_, _Stenocereus griseus_ (Haworth 1812: 182) Buxbaum (1961: 100), _Myrtillocactus geometrizans_ Martius, in Pfeiffer (1837: 90) Console (1897: 10), and more frequently on less steep stone walls together with _Pilosocereus chrysacanthus_ (Weber 1897: 178) Byles & Rowley (1957: 66), _Agave lophanthus_ Kunth (1850: 838), and _Dioon edule_ Lindley (1843: 59), as well as spikemosses and Mexican snow balls (Selaginellaceae).

**Etymology:** — The specific Latin epithet, _deceptrix_ means deceiver, after the fact that the new species was confused with _Hechtia epigyna_ when first collected by A. Espejo and collaborators.

**Additional specimens examined (paratypes):** — MEXICO. Hidalgo: Municipio Actopan, Puente de Dios, 20°18′13″ N, 98°47′20″ W, 1740 m, 25 August 2007, Zamudio et al. 13866, fruits (IEB, UAMIZ!); alrededores de Puente de Dios, municipio de Actopan, 20°18′08″ N, 98°47′23″ W, 1735 m, 15 May 2008, López-Ferrari et al. 3311♀ (IEB, UAMIZ!); Municipio de Cardonal, barranca de Tolantongo, 20°37′52″ N, 98°59′30″ W, 1739 m, 16 May 2008, Espejo et al. 7151♀ (IEB, UAMIZ!); ejido San Cristóbal, 20°38′20″ N, 98°59′30″ W, 1800 m, 18 March 2008, Zamudio & Zamudio 14085♀ (IEB, UAMIZ!); Municipio de Atotonilco el Grande, Puente de Dios, 20°18′08″ N, 98°47′22″ W, 1700 m, 02 April 2012, Hornung-Leoni et al. 1344♀ (HGOM!); Municipio Cardonal, barranca de Tolantongo, 20°38′8″ N, 98°59′27″ W, 1791 m, 03 May 2012, Hornung-Leoni et al. 1354♀ (HGOM!).

**Discussion:** — We located two collections of _Hechtia epigyna_: the type, collected in Jaumave, Tamaulipas, and one deposited at GH, H. W. von Rozyński 741 (leaf and staminate inflorescence), collected in “Tamaulipas, Jaumave near Nogales, II. 1933″.
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The locality provided by *von Rozynski 741* took us to Nogales in the Municipality of Jaumave, at the edge of “Reserva de la Biosfera El Cielo” in Tamaulipas. Our search was fruitful and we found large populations of *Hechtia epigyna*: round rosettes with old, lateral staminate inflorescences and infructescences.

**FIGURE 2.** *Hechtia deceptrix*. A. Plants in habitat. B. Comparative size of a staminate inflorescence and rosette. C. Central origin of the inflorescence according to the strict sympodium growth pattern. D. Details of staminate flowers at anthesis. E. Staminate inflorescence showing position of branches and flowers arrangement. F. Pistillate flowers at anthesis. (Photographs by Claudia T. Hornung-Leoni).
The first author also had the opportunity to observe plants named *Hechtia epigyna* in San Diego, California, in March 2014, long in cultivation, one of which at the time was in bloom bearing a lateral inflorescence with pink petals (Figure 3D) and presenting other features (vegetative and floral ones) that match well the protologue of *H. epigyna*; the available locality data for these cultivated plants indicated that they originally came from somewhere in Tamaulipas, Mexico. Overall, all the evidence indicates that *H. epigyna* is confined to Tamaulipas, and that both populations from Hidalgo represent the new species described in this article.

**TABLE 1.** Comparative features of *Hechtia deceptrix* and *H. epigyna*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characters</th>
<th><em>H. deceptrix</em></th>
<th><em>H. epigyna</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growth pattern</td>
<td>Strict symposium with central (terminal; Figures 1A, 2C) inflorescence</td>
<td>Pseudomonopodial, with lateral inflorescence (Figure 3C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaf adaxial surface</td>
<td>Glabrous (Figure 3A)</td>
<td>Finely white lepidote (Figure 3B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petal color at anthesis;</td>
<td>Greenish white to cream-white (Figures 2D–F)</td>
<td>Pink to white or white pink (Figure 3D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit orientation during dehiscence</td>
<td>Erect or ascending (Figure 3E)</td>
<td>Pendulous (Figure 3F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locality and elevation</td>
<td>Hidalgo, 1700–1800 m</td>
<td>Tamaulipas, 585–612 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiographic subprovince on the Sierra Madre Oriental Province</td>
<td>Carso Huasteco</td>
<td>Gran Sierra Plegada</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Hechtia deceptrix* differs from *H. epigyna* in several important characters (Table 1, Figure 3): the most important one is that the former has central or terminal inflorescences or strict symposium pattern (SPP) growth as defined by Ramírez et al. (2014) while *H. epigyna* has lateral inflorescences and pseudomonopodial growth pattern (SMP, Figure 3C). In this sense, *H. epigyna* forms part of the *H. glomerata* complex as defined by Jiménez (2011), whose members are distributed in several biotic provinces sensu Morrone (2014), namely: Mosquito (Honduras), Península de Yucatán, Tierras Altas de Chiapas, Sierra Madre Oriental, Altiplano Mexicano, Provincia Veracruzana, and Provincia de Tamaulipas, all draining chiefly into the Atlantic watershed of Megamexico. All taxa in the *H. glomerata* complex share a pseudomonopodial growth pattern. In addition, *H. deceptrix* has greenish-white petals in flowers of both sexes at anthesis and erect fruits, whereas *H. epigyna* has flowers with pink petals in both sexes and pendent fruits (Figure 3D, F).

Epigyny, shared by *Hechtia deceptrix* and *H. epigyna*, probably evolved twice in the genus as suggested by preliminary results of a phylogenetic study based on cpDNA and nuclear DNA (I. Ramírez, in prep.), where the *H. glomerata* complex sensu Jiménez (2011) is monophyletic.

**IUCN Conservation assessment:** The conservation status of *Hechtia deceptrix* was assessed using the IUCN Red List Criteria (IUCN 2010). Because of the lack of hard population information, we relied mostly upon distributional data, namely, the set of B criteria, geographical distribution assessed both as B1 (extent of occurrence, EOO) or B2 (area of occupancy, AOO). To estimate distributional ranges, both extent of occurrence and area of occupancy, we used the GeoCat software (GeoCat 2014; Bachman et al. 2011). Using both B criteria the species ranks as CR (Critically Endangered), with an EOO of 20.127 km² and AOO of 8.000 km². The species is known from five collection points all near roadsides and most likely occurs as isolated populations on appropriate microniches in Hidalgo in the Sierra Madre Oriental Province and neighboring areas of the Faja Volcánica Transmexicana Province.

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