Phytotaxa 73: 60–66 (2012)
www.mapress.com/phytotaxa/

Article

ISSN 1179-3155 (print edition)
PHYTOTAXA
ISSN 1179-3163 (online edition)

On the taxonomic status of the genus *Thrasyopsis* (Poaceae, Panicoideae, Paspaleae): new combinations in *Paspalum*

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Abstract

The two species formerly assigned to the genus *Thrasyopsis* are transferred to *Paspalum*, on the basis of morphological and molecular evidence. The new combinations *Paspalum rawitscheri* and *P. repandum* are published.

Introduction

The genus *Thrasyopsis* Parodi (1946: 293) was originally described to accommodate what seemed to be a new species from southern Brazil, named *Thrasyopsis rawitscheri* Parodi (1946: 294). In the same paper, Parodi transferred to the new genus the species *Panicum repandum* Nees (1829: 98), also from southern Brazil, as *T. repanda* (Nees) Parodi (1946: 297). Later, Burman (1980) noticed that Parodi's species had been previously described as *Panicum juergensii* Hackel (1915: 70), and made the new combination *Thrasyopsis juergensii* (Hack.) Soderstrom ex A. G. Burman (1980: 221). In his taxonomic revision of the genus, Burman (1983) summarized the current knowledge of *Thrasyopsis*, discussed its relationship with related genera, provided good descriptions and illustrations of the two recognized species, and made comments about their distribution, suggesting that both species are quite rare.

Several authors (Parodi 1946, Burman 1983, Denham & Zuloaga 2007) pointed out the morphological affinities of *Thrasyopsis* with both the genus *Thrasya* Kunth (1816: 120, t. 39) and the informal group '*Decumbentes*' of *Paspalum* Linnaeus (1759: 855), which have been recently merged into *Paspalum* subg. *Harpostachys* (Trinius 1834: 194) Denham (2005: 475). *Thrasyopsis* shares with *P.* subg. *Harpostachys* the occurrence of inflorescences that are frequently unispicate, and spikelets with a proximal male flower. *Thrasyopsis* and the species formerly included in *Thrasya* also share inflorescences with a foliaceous rachis, although this character also occurs in several unrelated species of *Paspalum* and can correlate with more than one anatomical structure (Aliscioni & Denham 2008). Denham & Zuloaga (2007) also mention as shared characters the presence of a pseudoligule and an obtuse lower glume.

According to Chase (unpublished manuscript), Parodi suggested in a memo to Swallen dated on October 1946 (Fig. 1) that the two species of *Thrasyopsis* should be transferred to *Paspalum* and are related to species of the informal group '*Crassa*'.

In a morphology-based cladistic analysis (Denham & Zuloaga 2007)**,** *Thrasyopsis* is placed as sister to *Paspalum* (including *Thrasya*). Nevertheless, the species sampling outside the section *Harpostachys* was very limited, so the relationship of *Thrasyopsis* with *Paspalum* remained to some extent unresolved.

Molecular data threw new light regarding the phylogenetic relationships of the *Thrasyopsis* species. According to them, the taxonomic status of *Thrasyopsis* should be reassessed.

 Accepted by Maria Vorontsova: 20 Nov. 2012; published online in PDF: 29 Nov. 2012