New records of *Habenaria tahitensis* NADEAUD for French Polynesia

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**Abstract**

While conducting our taxonomic research of Orchidaceae from Society Islands (French Polynesia), we have found new records of *Habenaria tahitensis* NADEAUD, which are listed in this text. Distinguishing characters for *Habenaria tahitensis* NADEAUD and *H. marquisensis* F. Br. are given. Changing of the present conservation status of the species is suggested.

**Key words:** endemism, French Polynesia, Marquises, Moorea, Tahiti; Orchidaceae, *Habenaria tahitensis*, *H. marquisensis*.

**Introduction**

During visits to the Bishop Museum in Hawaii, Honolulu, U.S.A. (BISH, author H.B. M.); the Museum National d’Histoire Naturelle, Paris, France (P, author H.B. M.) and the Musée de Tahiti et des Îles, Punaauia, Tahiti, French Polynesia (PAP, authors H.B. M. and M. S.) herbarium material for *Habenaria tahitensis* NADEAUD and *Habenaria marquisensis* F. Br. was compared with the type specimens and each other.

Comparing the type materials of both species, *Habenaria tahitensis* and *H. marquisensis* F. Br., showed a lot of differences. The most characteristic features for *H. marquisensis* are the lanceolate and acute leaves placed along the whole stem from base to inflorescence; inflorescence subspicate, petals entire, never divided, broadly ovate; labellum 3-lobed, the lobes nearly equal in length or the middle one slightly longer, spur as long as ovary and pedicel; the gynostemium processes short. In contrast to these the characteristic features for *Habenaria tahitensis* NADEAUD are leaves in the central part of stem; inflorescence racemose, subspicate, many-flowered; petals spreading, each always divided into two divergent 1-veined segments; the upper one lanceolate, the lower one linear; spur longer than ovary plus pedicel and the bract.

Analyses of specimens showed that some specimens named *Habenaria tahitensis* var. *marquisensis* (F. BROWN) JACQUET proved to be identical with *Habenaria tahitensis* NADEAUD - no differences could be found.

*Habenaria tahitensis* NADEAUD, Enumération des plantes Indigènes de l’île de Tahiti: 38 (1873).

Holotype: Tahiti, Tearapeau, 1100 m, 29.05.1939 J. Nadeaud 274 [P 00311913].

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MEYER, BUTAUD & JACQ (2006: tab. 1, pp. 5–6) listed Habenaria tahitensis NADEAUD as endemic for Society Islands, more precisely in the tab. 3 (p. 8) postulated this species as endemic for Tahiti only. In tab. 5 (p. 12) they changed the status of Habenaria tahitensis NADEAUD s.str. from previous VU = vulnerable to EX = extinct. Our results show that Habenaria tahitensis NADEAUD s.str. has been found in Archipelago Marquesas 1922, 1987, 1988 and 2007 (record of living plants). Based on these results the conservation status of this plant should be VU = vulnerable, or maybe better CR = critically endangered. Monitoring and verification of the real threat is still necessary.

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References