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CYPHERUS FLAVICOMUS, THE CORRECT NAME FOR CYPHERUS ALBOMARGINATUS

GORDON C. TUCKER

ABSTRACT

The correct name for Cyperus albomarginatus, a pantropical and warm-temperate sedge, is shown to be C. flavicomus Michaux.

Key Words: Cyperus albomarginatus, C. flavicomus, Cyperaceae

The species commonly known as Cyperus albomarginatus Mart. & Schrad. is pantropical and warm temperate. In North America, it extends along the coastal plain and piedmont from Florida to New York and westward to New Mexico (Fernald, 1950). It also occurs on the Pacific coast of Mexico and Central America (Tucker, 1983); in South America from eastern Brazil to Ecuador and Paraguay; and in the Old World tropics (Kükenthal, 1935–36). The species is readily identified by its widely spaced, non-overlapping scales with their prominent hyaline borders, to which the epithet “albomarginatus” refers (Tucker, 1983).

In most twentieth century floristic works the authority given for Cyperus albomarginatus is “Mart. & Schrad. ex Nees” or simply “Mart. & Schrad.” However, the actual name published by Nees in Flora Brasiliensis in 1842 was Pycreus albomarginatus Mart. & Schrad. ex Nees; C. albomarginatus was merely a manuscript name given in synonymy there, and hence not validly published (ICBN, Art. 34.1d). The combination Cyperus albomarginatus was first validly published twelve years later by Steudel (Syn. eup. 10, 1854). Fernald (1950), Gleason and Cronquist (1962) and Radford et al. (1967) have treated this species as C. albomarginatus. However, in nineteenth century manuals, e.g., Chapman (1860), and early twentieth century works, e.g., Britton and Brown (1901) and Robinson and Fernald (1908), the name applied to this species was C. flavicomus Michx. The change in name used seems to have been the result of publication of Kükenthal’s worldwide monograph of Cyperus in Das Pflanzenreich (1935–36). There, Kükenthal treated this species

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as *C. albomarginatus* Martius & Schrad. *ex* Nees, while placing the older name, *C. flavicomus* Michx., in the synonymy of the common eastern North American species, *C. strigosus* L. Through the courtesy of the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, I was able to examine a photograph of the type of *C. flavicomus* Michx. This type can also be seen on the IDC microfiche edition of the Michaux herbarium. Apparently, Kükenthal never saw the type of *C. flavicomus*, for it is clearly a plant of the species currently referred to as *C. albomarginatus*. Thus the oldest name for the species is *C. flavicomus* Michx., with the following synonymy:


*C. flavicomus* Vahl, Enum. pl. 2: 360. 1805.—Type: U.S.A. South Carolina, Bosc s.n. (Holotype: c'1), nom. superfl.

*Pyreus albomarginatus* Mart. & Schrad. *ex* Nees in Mart., Fl. bras. 2(1): 9. 1842.—Type: Brazil, Prov. Piauí, Martius s.n. (Holotype: m!).

*C. sabulosus* Mart. & Schrad. *ex* Nees in Mart., Fl. bras. 2(1): 10. 1842.—Type: Brazil, Prov. Rio Nigri, juxta lacum di Coari, Martius s.n. (Lectotype, here designated: m!).

*C. albomarginatus* (Mart. & Schrad. *ex* Nees in Mart.) Steud., Syn. cyp. 10. 1854.

*C. sabulosus* (Mart. & Schrad. *ex* Nees in Mart.) Steud., Syn. cyp. 10. 1854.


Uttal (1984) in his summary of Michaux's type localities, followed Kükenthal's and Fernald's usage in treating *Cyperus flavicomus* as a synonym of *C. strigosus*. Uttal gave the spelling as "flavicornus," while the epithet was spelled "flavicorns" both in *Flora boreali-americana* and on the label of Michaux's type. [L. J. Uttal (pers. comm.) has acknowledged that his spelling "flavicorns" was an error of transliteration, not caught in proofreading, and that in his original handwritten notes the spelling was indeed "flavicorns."—Editor.]

Hooper and Raynal (1969) treated *Cyperus albomarginatus* as a synonym of the earlier name, *C. macrostachyos* Lam. (Tabl. encycl. 1: 147, 1791). They indicated that they did not see the type of *C. albomarginatus*. Examination of a photograph of the type of *C. macrostachyos* ("ex Africa," Herb. Lamarck, P), shows it to be strikingly different from *C. flavicomus* Michx. (= *C. albomargina-
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notably in its long spikelets with 60 to 70 closely imbricate scales; *C. flavicomus* has only 6 to 24 scales per spikelet. Another distinctive characteristic of *C. flavicomus* is its spreading, non-overlapping scales (Kükenthal, 1935–36; Fernald, 1950; Tucker, 1983). Thus, the type of *C. macrostachyos* Lam. clearly does not belong in the same species as *C. flavicomus*. It seems best identified with the Indian-Asian *C. puncticulatus var. quinquagintiflorus* C. B. Clarke, sensu Kükenthal (1935–36). Such disposition of *C. macrostachyos* is supported by Kunth (1837), who also treated *C. macrostachyos* as a variety of *C. puncticulatus*.

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LITERATURE CITED


