The status of *Octoblepharum albidum* var. *violascens* Müll.Hal. (Octoblepharaceae, Bryophyta)

FABIANO SANTOS DANTAS[1] & DENILSON FERNANDES PERALTA[2]

[1] *Programa de Pós-Graduação em Botânica, Universidade Estadual de Feira de Santana, Bahia, Brazil. E-mail: fabianodantas.bio@gmail.com (correspondence author)*
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1059-2770
[2] *Instituto de Pesquisas Ambientais, São Paulo, Brazil. E-mail: denilsonfperalta@gmail.com*
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4304-7258

Abstract: FABIANO SANTOS DANTAS, DENILSON FERNANDES PERALTA (2026) The status of *Octoblepharum albidum* var. *violascens* Müll.Hal. (Octoblepharaceae, Bryophyta). *Frahmia* 55:1-2.[1]

Octoblepharum albidum var. *violascens* is an enigmatic taxon known from Tropical America. Although the original material was destroyed in the B herbarium, we found remaining material in European herbaria (BM, L, PC, S). There is evidence in the literature indicating that this variety is conspecific with *Octoblepharum cylindricum*, but the synonymization has never been formally proposed. After analyzing the types, we conclude that both taxa, in fact, correspond to the same species. Accordingly, we selected one of the specimens as the lectotype of *O. albidum* var. *violascens* and subsequently placed it in synonymy under *O. cylindricum*.

Keywords: Bryophytes; Dicranidae; Mosses; Taxonomy; Tropical America.

1. Introduction

Octoblepharum albidum var. *violascens* Müll.Hal. is an enigmatic taxon from Tropical America, characterized by plants exhibiting intense violaceous pigmentation at the base of the leaves. This variety was described by Müller (1847 [1846]) based on a specimen collected by Herrn Moritz in the Caribbean region. Although the protologue cites Colombia as the origin of the type specimen, Florschütz-de Waard and Florschütz (1989) subsequently corrected the geographic attribution of Moritz's collections, indicating that the specimens were collected within the territory of present-day Venezuela.

Interestingly, in the same year that Müller (1847 [1846]) published *O. albidum* var. *violascens*, Hampe (1847) presented a catalogue of the mosses collected by Herrn Moritz in the Caribbean region. Examination of this work revealed that only *Octoblepharum cylindricum* Schimp. *ex* Mont. was included among the listed species. Hampe (1847) also criticized the prevailing practice of distributing cryptogamic collections among different herbaria before specialist examination, noting that such fragmentation complicated both the identification and the subsequent tracing of specimens. In this context, it is plausible that Müller received one of these distributed specimens and used it as the basis for his description, particularly because Moritz's original bryophyte collection is housed in the BM herbarium, where Hampe was working at the time.

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Further evidence emerged from Müller's treatment of *Octoblepharum* Hedw. in *Synopsis Muscorum Frondosorum* (Müller, 1849), in which he recognized only two species in the genus. Among the specimens examined under *Octoblepharum cylindricum* was a collection made by Moritz in the Caribbean region. Müller also noted that this species frequently exhibits intense violaceous pigmentation at the base of the leaves. Given the striking similarity between this diagnostic feature and the character used to describe *O. albidum* var. *violascens*, these observations prompted us to consider the possibility that the two taxa are conspecific.

It is important to highlight that Florschütz (1956) did not include *O. albidum* var. *violascens* in his taxonomic revision of the genus in the Americas, likely because he was unaware of the taxon or lacked access to the type specimen in the B herbarium, given that Carl Müller's collection was destroyed. Subsequently, Salazar Allen (1992) noted that some specimens of *Octoblepharum albidum* Hedw. possess a conspicuous violaceous pigmentation at the leaf base, distinguishing them from the typical form, however, she did not relate these plants to Müller's variety. In contrast, Yano (1992) adopted the name *O. albidum* var. *violascens* and extended the known distribution of the taxon to Brazil.

To solve this problem, we searched major European herbaria (BM, L, PC, S) for *Octoblepharum* specimens collected by Moritz in the Caribbean region. Notably, all specimens located were identified as *Octoblepharum cylindricum*. Careful examination of these specimens and their morphological characters confirmed their identity as *O. cylindricum*.

Considering the historical and morphological evidence presented above, we conclude that *O. albidum* var. *violascens* does not represent a taxon distinct from *O. cylindricum*. We therefore consider the Moritz collections identified as *O. cylindricum* to constitute original material of *O. albidum* var. *violascens*. Accordingly, we designate one of these specimens as the lectotype of *O. albidum* var. *violascens* and place the name in synonym with *O. cylindricum*.

2. Taxonomic treatment

Octoblepharum cylindricum Schimp. *ex* Mont., Ann. Sci. Nat., Bot., sér. 2, 14: 349. 1840. Protologue: "Hab. ad truncos deustos secùs ripas fluminis quod *Oyapok* dicunt, Maio 1835, lectum. — Lepr. *Coll.* n. 282". Type: French Guiana, leg. *Leprieur 282* (lectotype PC [bc.PC0732616!] — annotated on a label as "typus" by Florschütz in 1953, and designated by Florschütz (1956); isolectotypes PC [bc.PC0695018!, PC0695019!]).

= *Octoblepharum albidum* var. *violascens* Müll.Hal., Linnaea 19: 208. 1847[1846]. Protologue: "Hr. Moritz sendete dieselbe von Caripe". Type: Venezuela, Caripe, leg. *H. Moritz 134* (lectotype BM [bc.BM000735022!] — here designated; isolectotypes BM, L, PC, S).

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