

Ribes* × *beatonii*, the original name for *Ribes aureum* × *sanguineum

E. C. NELSON

Tippitiwitchet Cottage, Hall Road, Outwell, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE14 8PE

A short, anonymous paragraph in *The Gardeners' Chronicle* on 30 April 1842 reported that a "*New Ribes*" had recently blossomed in the Clapton Nursery, then owned by Hugh Low (Willson, 1982: 105–106). The plant had been raised by Donald Beaton from *Ribes sanguineum* Pursh (red-flowering currant) deliberately cross-pollinated by *R. aureum* Pursh (golden currant), both north American species quite recently introduced to cultivation. The flowers, produced as profusely as in the seed-parent, were described as "being of a reddish yellow colour, more slender than those of *R. sanguineum*, while the leaves bear a strong resemblance to those of *R. aureum*." The habit was characterised as differing from both its parents "being ... much more erect and graceful" (Anon., 1842: 288). The paragraph was repeated or paraphrased in several other contemporary periodicals (for example, *Paxton's Magazine of Botany* 9: 118, 1842). In none of these publications was any name provided for the hybrid.

A year later, in Loudon's *The Gardener's Magazine*, the plant was initially reported under the name *Ribes hybridum* without a description (Loudon, 1843a: 58): that binomial was not available because Besser (1809: 186) had published it for a European plant that was identical with *R. grossularia* L. Subsequently, in the same volume of *The Gardener's Magazine*, within "Arboricultural Notices" (Loudon, 1843b: 269), the currant was named *Ribes beatonii*: "a hybrid ... between *R. sanguineum* and *R. aureum* ... It is a vigorous plant, with long racemes of flowers, partaking of the colour of both species." Although very brief, this description is adequate to validate the name. Don (1845) listed "*Ribes Beatonii*" citing *Edward's Botanical Register* as the source of the name and although a list of *Ribes* was published in "Miscellaneous matter of the *Botanical Register* 1843" it does not include this name.

Very soon after Loudon's note was issued, a second name was published for this hybrid currant. The shrub was listed as "New; rare"

under the invalid name "*Ribes Hybridus Gordonianum*" in the seventh edition of William Kenrick's *The New American Orchardist* (1844: 450), for example. This suggests that it was thought inappropriate that the working gardener and not his deceased employer was receiving the credit: it is, of course, quite possible that Beaton himself wanted the name to change.

The name *Ribes gordonianum* was used by Charles Lemaire when the hybrid was illustrated in plate 165, dated November 1846, in *Flore de serres*. Lemaire seems to have been puzzled by this epithet and indicated that he did not know who the author was: "...et pour nous, nous ignorons l'auteur de son appellation dédicative". He referred to Paxton's *Magazine of Botany* but not to Loudon's *The Gardener's Magazine*, and clearly knew that Beaton was working at that time for Sir William Middleton at Shrubland Park. Subsequently, numerous authors (for example Koch, 1863a and 1863b) mistakenly stated that Paxton had named the hybrid – in fact, Paxton did not use any binomial even when he referred to the plant a second time (Paxton, 1843b).

After Lemaire's publication, the replacement eponym *gordonianum* was more commonly used, although authors sometimes were bewildered by it, implying that *beatonii* was more apposite (see, for example, Koch's (1863a) article about red- and yellow-blossomed "Johannisbeere" and the French translation of it (Koch, 1863b): "Ce même hybride était cultivé ... sous le nom de *Ribes Beatonii* qui rappelait le jardinier à qui il était dû; cette dernière dénomination lui est encore conservée par quelques personnes."

An added complication was indicated by Goldring (1888): "R[ibes]. Gordonianum ... is also known under the name R. Beatonii and R. Loudonii ...". This is not the earliest indication of the epithet *loudonii*, which also does not appear to have been validly published; it was included by Lavallée (1877: 121) in synonymy under *R. gordonianum* but without any explicit source. I have failed to trace an earlier printing of the name. Lavallée (1877) also gave "R. Bactoni Aliq. Hort." as yet another synonym but it is most probably a misprinting of *beatonii* – "ac" instead of "ea" – although he also had a variety of *R. nigrum* with that particular name.

There is little doubt that *Ribes × beatonii* was the first name published for the artificial hybrid *R. sanguineum × aureum*, and under the *International Code of Botanical Nomenclature* (McNeill *et al*, 2006) it has priority and should be used instead of the later *R. × gordonianum*. There follows a summary of the synonymy of *R. × beatonii*.

Ribes × beatonii hortulanorum ex Loudon, *The Gardener's Magazine* **19**: 269 (1843b).

Neotype: icon. *Flore de Serres et des Jardins de l'Europe* **2**, plate 165.

= *R. × gordonianum* hortulanorum ex Lemaire, *Flore de Serres et des Jardins de l'Europe* **2**, plate 165 (1846)

= *R. × loudonii* nom. ined., cit. Lavallée, *Arboretum Segrezianum. Énumération des arbres et arbrisseaux cultivés à Segrez, Seine-et-Oise* 121 (1877)

= *R. × bactonii sphalm.*, cit. Lavallée, *Arboretum Segrezianum. Énumération des arbres et arbrisseaux cultivés à Segrez, Seine-et-Oise*, 121 (1877).

A note on Donald Beaton (1802–1863)

Donald Beaton was a Gaelic-speaking native of Urray, Ross-shire, Scotland (Waymark, 2009). In 1829 he became a gardener and general manager at Haffield House in Hertfordshire, England, which was owned by William Gordon (1794–1836). Loudon (1837) noted:

[Beaton] has been gardener and general manager to William Gordon, Esq., at Haffield, for the last eight years; and only leaves his situation in consequence of the death of his employer, and the reduction of the establishment. While in the employment of Mr. Gordon, he had, as he informs us, peculiar advantages for acquiring professional knowledge, being allowed the travelling expenses which he annually incurred in visiting gardens in distant parts of the country, including the London nurseries; and even the expense of an extensive correspondence with gardeners was defrayed by Mr. Gordon, who allowed him the free use of his extensive library.

Beaton found employment as gardener to Thomas Harris in Kilburn, London, before becoming head gardener at Shrubland Park in Suffolk,

the home of Sir William Middleton, in 1840. Beaton was credited with creating spectacular displays of summer bedding at Shrubland Park. As well as being a practical and expert gardener, he regularly wrote articles for *The Cottage Gardener* and also contributed to Loudon's *The Gardener's Magazine* and *The Gardeners' Chronicle*: Elliott (1990) wondered if Beaton had been the "greatest gardening journalist of the early nineteenth century". Beaton was adept at cross-breeding plants; in his autobiography he stated that while at Haffield House he had "crossed all sorts of plants". This experience led him to correspond indirectly through the columns of the *Journal of Horticulture* (formerly *The Cottage Gardener*) with Charles Darwin (see Elliott, 2010), but Darwin soon came to the conclusion Beaton was untrustworthy as far as botanical matters were concerned, "a clever, but d—d cock-sure man".

Given the date of the first notice of *Ribes* × *beatonii*, as well as the second name for it, his hybrid currant must have been raised while Beaton was employed by Gordon at Haffield House. It could not have originated at Shrubland Park (as erroneously stated, for example, by Bean, 1921). Donald Beaton was also commemorated in the generic name *Beatonia* by the Very Reverend William Herbert; it is relegated to synonymy under *Tigridia* Ker-Gawl. Beaton had cultivated this at Kilburn. One other plant was named after him, at least in gardening circles – the "very pretty" *Achimenes beatonii*, cultivated by W. P. Ayres, gardener to J. Cook Esq., of Brooklands, Blackheath, was shown at the Horticultural Society in Chiswick on 21 June 1845 (Harrison, 1846: 12). The plant circulated on the continent (Anonymous, 1847: 162, 187) and was described in some detail as a variety of *A. rosea* Lindl. by Löscher (1849: 135; see also Regel, 1848: 251).

REFERENCES

- Anon.** (1842). New *Ribes*. *Gardeners' Chronicle* 1842: 288.
- Anon.** (1847). *Catalogue de l'exposition publique des produits de l'agriculture et de l'horticulture instituée par le gouvernement et ouverte à Bruxelles, en Septembre 1847*. Bruxelles: Imprimerie de F. Parent.
- Bean, W. J.** (1921). *Trees and Shrubs Hardy in the British Isles*, 2. London: John Murray.
- Besser, W. S. J. G. von** (1809). *Primitiae Florae Galiciae Austriacae Utriusque*, 1. Vienna.

- Don, P.N.** (1845). *Hortus Cantabrigiensis; or an accented catalogue of indigenous and exotic plants cultivated in the Cambridge Botanic Garden*, edn 13. London: Longman & Co.
- Elliott, B.** (1990). Donald Beaton: the greatest gardening journalist of the early nineteenth century? *The Garden* **115**: 64–67.
- Elliott, B.** (2010). The reception of Charles Darwin in the British horticultural press. *Occasional Papers from the Lindley Library* **3**: 5–83.
- Goldring, W.** (1888). Flowering trees and shrubs. *The Garden* **34**: 230–231.
- [Harrison, J.]** (1846). The Metropolitan flora exhibitions. *Floricultural Cabinet* **14**: 6–14.
- Herbert, W.** (1839). *Beatonia*, sub *Gelasine azurea*. *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* **66**: tab. 3779.
- Kenrick, W.** (1844). *The New American Orchardist*, edn 2. Boston: Otis, Broaders, and Company.
- Koch, K.H.E.** (1863a). Die roth- und gelb-blühende Johannisbeere (*Ribes sanguineum* Pursh und *R. aureum* Pursh). *Wochenschrift des Vereines zur Beförderung des Gartenbaues in den Königlich Preussischen Staaten für Gärtnerei und Pflanzenkunde* **6** (no. 21): 161–163.
- Koch, K.H.E.** (1863b). Les *Ribes sanguineum* Pursh et *aureum* Pursh, et les arbustes qui en sont issus. *Journal de la Société Impériale et Centrale d'Horticulture* **9**: 612–615.
- Lavallée, P.A.M.** (1877). *Arboretum Segrezianum. Énumération des arbres et arbrisseaux cultivés à Segrez, Seine-et-Oise*. Paris: Librairie J.-B. Baillière et fils.
- Lemaire, C.** (1846). *Ribes gordonianum* (hybr.). *Flore de Serres et des Jardins de l'Europe* **2**: plate 165. Ghent: Louis van Houtte
- Löscher, E.** (1849). Ueber die Pracht-Kultur der Gattungen *Achimenes* und *Gloxinia*. *Neue allgemeine deutsche Garten- und Blumenzeitung* **5**: 129–147.
- [Loudon, J.C.]** (1837). Mr. Beaton. *The Gardener's Magazine* **3**: 205.
- [Loudon, J.C.]** (1843a). Report on rare or select articles in certain British nurseries and private gardens. *The Gardener's Magazine* **19**: 55–69.
- [Loudon, J.C.]** (1843b). *Ribes Beatonii* [in] Art. XI. Arboricultural notices. *The Gardener's Magazine* **19**: 269.
- McNeill, J., Barrie, F.R., Burder, H.M., Demoulin, V., Hawksworth, D.L., Marhold, K., Nicolson, D.H., Prado, J., Silva, P.C., Skog, J.E., Wiersema, J.H. & Turland, N.J.** (2006). International Code of Botanical Nomenclature (Vienna Code). *Regnum Vegetabile* **146**: 1–568.

- Paxton, J.** (1842). *Ribes albidum*. *Paxton's Magazine of Botany* **9**: 118.
- Paxton, J.** (1843). *Ribes albidum*. *Paxton's Magazine of Botany* **10**: 55.
- Regel, E.** (1848). Ueber die Gattungen der Gernereen. *Flora oder angenehme botanische Zeitung* **31**: 241–253.
- Waymark, J.** (2009). Beaton, Donald (1802–1863). In: Goldman, L. (ed), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition. Oxford <www.oxforddnb.com/ipac.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/view/article/96720> accessed August 2, 2010>.
- Willson, E. J.** (1982). *West London Nursery Gardens*. London: Fulham & Hammersmith Historical Society.