

Hybanthus Jacq. Subg. *Ionidium* (Vent.) Schulze-Menz is represented by nearly 45 species in South America. Schulze-Menz (1936) subdivided it in four sections; later on, Sparre (1950) recognized only two of the Schulze-Menz'groups and suggested the circumscription of three new ones, by splitting the sections and regrouping of species. The complexity of both previous infrageneric treatments was related with the lack of diagnostic macromorphological characters. The objective of our study was to investigate leaf micromorphological characters in order to re-evaluate previous morphological classifications and to appreciate their taxonomic value in the delimitation of *Hybanthus* sections. A micromorphological study of leaf surfaces and margins of 25 representative species was performed with Scanning Electronic Microscopy (SEM). The material was obtained from wild populations and/or herbarium specimens. At least, five leaves of each species were analyzed. The studied species were assigned to five different SEM types, I to V. These morphological patterns were established in accordance with the presence or absence of different kind of trichomes and papillae on the leaf surface and margins. The results support previous opinions of taxonomic specialists in relation to maintain the sections *Hybanthus* Subg. *Ionidium* Sect. *Bigibbosae* Schulze-Menz and Sect. *Micranthae* Schulze-Menz. Three sectional names are proposed: *Hybanthus* Sect. *Ionidium* is automatically established and Sections *Parviflorae* and *Pombalia* are here designated. *Hybanthus atropurpureus* is designated lectotype for *Hybanthus* Sect. *Micranthae*. A diagnostic key for identification as well as descriptions of the sections are proved.

Key words: *Hybanthus* subgenus *Ionidium*, Foliar micromorphology, Leaf margin, South America