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A new intergeneric hybrid: ×*Gastonialoe* ‘Gordon Rowley’

Colin C Walker

A new intergeneric hybrid genus ×*Gastonialoe* is named for crosses with the parentage *Gasteria* × *Gonialoe* (*Aloe*). An attractive cultivar in this new nothogenus is named ×*Gastonialoe* ‘Gordon Rowley’, in honour of an ardent champion of such hybrids. Photography by the author.

×*Gastonialoe*

The genus *Aloe* has recently been split based on new molecular evidence. This has resulted in the excision of a small number of species into segregate genera. Grace et al (2013) first separated the tree aloes into *Aloidendron* and *Kumara* and the scrambling species of *Aloe* into *Aloiampelos*. This was followed by Manning et al (2014) who separated off a small number of southern African species into *Aristaloe* and *Gonialoe*. Nevertheless, this has left *Aloe* largely intact with around 500 species, including about 60 subspecies and varieties (Carter et al, 2011). These changes were summarised in this Journal for those wishing to follow the latest developments (Walker, 2013, 2014).

Aloe and its close relatives are very easily hybridised, with a large number of hybrids already known. Of particular interest here is the new genus *Gonialoe* which includes just three species, all formerly included in *Aloe*: *Gonialoe dinteri*, *G. sladeniana* and *G. variegata* (Manning et al, 2014). The latter species, known most familiarly as *Aloe variegata*, is one of the parents of several hybrids. When hybridisation involves a second genus, an intergeneric nothogenus is required. Here we are concerned with crosses involving *G. variegata* and the genus *Gasteria*.



Fig. 1 ×*Gastonialoe* ‘Gordon Rowley’ in a 15cm-diameter pan

Intergeneric hybrids with the parentage *Gasteria* × *Gonialoe* require a new name, for which the following is proposed:

×*Gastonialoe* C.C.Walker nothogenus nov. (*Gasteria* × *Gonialoe*)

×*Gastonialoe* ‘Gordon Rowley’ cv. nov.

It gives me great pleasure to name a clone of an intergeneric hybrid after Gordon Rowley, past BCSS President and editor of *Bradleya*, who has long been a champion of such hybridisation and has himself named many intergeneric hybrids. Rowley (1982) catalogued intergeneric hybrids in succulents, and the list has been added to on several occasions since, for example, Rowley (2013b, 2014a,b). The current state of play on hybrid succulents in general and intergeneric hybrids in particular, is well summarised in Gordon’s latest book (Rowley, 2017).

The clone I am naming in Gordon’s honour (Fig. 1) has been in cultivation for many years and I have grown it since 1989 as *Gasteria batesiana* × *Aloe variegata*. However, with the generic concept I am adopting here, the parentage becomes *Gasteria batesiana* × *Gonialoe variegata*.

This is a very attractive, robust and hence desirable cultivar that deserves its own cultivar name. I believe that this clone has been illustrated at least twice (Newton, 1998: 117; Rowley, 2014b: 23) but as far as I can ascertain, this particular clone has never received a name until now.

×*Gastonialoe* ‘Gordon Rowley’ is clearly intermediate between its two parents (Fig. 2). The plant forms rosettes up to about 15cm across, branches freely from the base, thus is readily propagated from stem cuttings. The leaves are deltoid and shallowly V-shaped in cross section, with a prominent channel, hence being more similar in shape to those of the *Gonialoe* parent, but unlike *G. variegata*, the leaf arrangement is rosulate and not 3-ranked. The surface texturing, in contrast, is more closely related to that of the *Gasteria* parent,



Fig. 2 *×Gastoniae* 'Gordon Rowley' (front) with its parents *Gonialoe (Aloe) variegata* (left) and *Gasteria batesiana* (rear right), showing clearly the intermediate features of this intergeneric hybrid

being heavily marked with prominently raised whitish tubercles, whilst the characteristic banding or variegated pattern of *G. variegata* is absent. The leaf margins, though, are similar to *G. variegata*, being white, cartilaginous and armed with minute teeth. Interestingly, in the 27 years that I have grown this plant I do not recall it ever having flowered.

Older *×Gastoniae* cultivars

Other, older cultivars involving intergeneric hybrids with a species of *Gonialoe* have been recorded by Newton (1998, 2001) and Rowley (2014b). All of these involve *G. variegata* as one of the parents together with a range of *Gasteria* species. The other species of *Gonialoe*, *G. dinteri* and *G. sladeniana*, are much rarer and more temperamental in cultivation and hence, as far as I can ascertain, have not been used in the production of intergeneric hybrids.

I list here six additional *×Gastoniae* cultivars involving *G. variegata* (see Rowley (2014b) and Newton (2001) for further details); it is currently unknown if any of these are still in cultivation, since some originated over 100 years ago:

- (1) *×Gastoniae* 'Mortolensis' (= *Aloe ×mortolensis* Berger = *×Gasteraloe mortolensis* = *Gonialoe variegata* × *Gasteria acinaciformis*).
- (2) *×Gastoniae* 'Pfrimmeri' (= *×Gasteraloe pfrimmeri* Guillaumin = *Gonialoe variegata* × *Gasteria* sp.).

(3) *×Gastoniae* 'Radlii' (= *×Gasteraloe radlii* L.E.Newton = *Gonialoe variegata* (or *Aloe serrulata*) × *Gasteria* sp.).

(4) *×Gastoniae* 'Rebutii' (= *Aloe ×rebutii* hort. ex Berger = *×Gasteraloe rebutii* = *Gonialoe variegata* × *Gasteria* sp.).

(5) *×Gastoniae* 'Sculptilis' (= *×Gasteraloe sculptilis* G.D.Rowley ex L.E.Newton = *Gonialoe variegata* × *Gasteria ×cheilophylla*).

(6) *×Gastoniae* 'Smaragdina' (= *Aloe ×smaragdina* hort. ex Berger = *×Gasteraloe smaragdina* = *Gonialoe variegata* × *Gasteria ? candicans*).

Other *×Gastoniae* cultivars involving *G. variegata* as one of the parents and a wider range of *Gasteria* parents were listed by Newton (1998), but none of these were provided with cultivar names.

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