

February Succulent of the Month

Wally Ward

Haworthiopsis limifolia limifolia x Haworthia cooperi venusta GM292

SYNONYMS: the two plants that united to form this hybrid are named above. The *Haworthiopsis* has a history involving change in genus (from *Haworthia* to *Haworthiopsis*), and elimination of a subgeneric name (*Hexangulares Uitewaal* ex M.B. Bayer). *H. limifolia* under the generic name *Haworthia* has a lengthy list of synonyms, and the list can be found in *Haworthia Revisited--A Revision of the Genus*, published 1999). Per convention the mother plant, i.e., the pollen recipient, is listed first (*H. limifolia limifolia*).

The pollen donor, *Haworthia cooperi venusta* GM292, is listed second. *Haworthia cooperi* has two synonyms, *H. arachnoidea* and *H. vittata*, but the subspecies *venusta* apparently does not. The two photos of *H. cooperi limifolia* are subject to copyright of Gerhard Marx and are used here by permission of Gerhard Marx. Readers who are generally interested in major taxonomic changes that have occurred to *Haworthia* and related general should see "All Change in Aloe and *Haworthia*" by Dr. Colin G. Walker, *Cactus World* vol. 31, no. 4, p. 297 (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259581518_All_change_in_Alow_and_Haworthia).



Haworthiopsis limifolia limifolia x Haworthia cooperi venusta GM292



Father plant of *Haworthiopsis limifolia limifolia x Haworthia cooperi venusta GM292*, *H. cooperi venusta*. Photo credit: Gerhard Marx



Mother plant of *Haworthiopsis limifolia limifolia* x *Haworthia cooperi venusta* GM292, *H. limifolia limifolia*



Haworthiopsis limifolia limifolia x *Haworthia cooperi venusta*:
structure of upper surface of the leaves



Haworthiopsis limifolia limifolia x *Haworthia cooperi venusta*:
structure of lower leaf surface

COMMON NAMES

There appear to be no common names of the parent plants,

HABITAT/DISTRIBUTION

Using Bayer's distribution map in *Haworthia Revisited*, one can see that *H. limifolia limifolia* is widely distributed including localities in Swaziland, KwaZulu/Natal and Mpumalanga Provinces. *H. cooperi venusta* as of 1999 was known from only one small area near the Eastern Cape Province coast NE of Alexandria and near Grahamstown. The hybrid I created apparently has not been seen in nature.

DESCRIPTION

The hybrid very strongly resembles *Haworthiopsis limifolia limifolia* and would likely pass as a member of the *Haworthiopsis* genus but also differs in several respects from *H. limifolia limifolia*. The leaves are hard and dark with minimal ridges on upper and lower surfaces that form sublinear structures that on some leaves are interrupted and that bend at an angle, turning down toward each margin of the leaves,, but these are not very high above the surrounding leaf surfaces. In contrast *H. limifolia limifolia* has confluent transverse ridges. The hybrid leaves are extended and narrow with minimal curvature, in contrast with *H. limifolia* leaves, which are much wider especially near the base of the rosette and have conspicuous curvature.. Both hybrid and *limifolia* are stemless. *H. limifolia limifolia* offsets readily and abundantly, but my hybrid has never formed offsets. *H. cooperi venusta* does not even seem related to the hybrid, what with *venusta*'s soft and hirsute leaves; see the two photos provided by permission of Gerhard Marx. I mentioned to an HCSS guest several years ago that my *Haworthia* hybrids all strongly resembled the plant that was the pollen recipient, and he commented that this is the "mother effect." My hybrid has never bloomed, unlike the two parent plants. I may resort to tissue culture to multiply the number of hybrids from this cross. To see what kind of hybrid is produced by a reverse cross from *H. limifolia* onto *H. cooperi venusta GM292*, see the photograph labeled *H. cooperi venusta x H. limifolia limifolia*; that cross appears to have wiped out all the distinguishing characteristics of *H. limifolia limifolia*, so the mother effect appears to be very significant.



Haworthia cooperi venusta x H. limifolia

CULTIVATION/GROWTH

I have grown the parent plants away from strong sun but in bright, indirect light, using a well-drained soil mix consisting mostly of perlite. The *H. cooperi venusta* died a few years ago, but the *H. limifolia limifolia* has flourished. The hybrid also seems to thrive in a well-drained soil mix but out of strong sun and mostly in bright, indirect light. I started the *H. cooperi venusta* used as pollen donor for this hybrid from seed in 2005, having ordered the seeds from the *Haworthia* Society. The *H. limifolia limifolia* pollen recipient is an offset from a plant I obtained from the HCSS Exchange Table in the early 1990s. For this hybrid in 2005 I sowed the seed that produced this hybrid in 2012.

USES

The only use for the parent plants or hybrid is that *H. limifolia limifolia* is hawked as an herbal remedy in the area of eastern South Africa where it is abundant. It is offered as a treatment for fertility problems, sores, blood purification, cough, skin rashes, sunburn, burns generally, and gastrointestinal problems.

AVAILABILITY

The parent plants are sold via Internet, but the *H. cooperi venusta* is expensive. As far as I know, the hybrid made the subject of this report is not marketed.

REFERENCES

Bayer, Bruce, 1999. *Haworthia Revisited--A Revision of the Genus*. Umdaus Press.

Scott, Charles L. 1985. *The Genus Haworthia--A Taxonomic Revision*. Aloe Books.

Walker, Dr. Colin G. 2013. All Change in Aloe and Haworthia. Cactus World, Vol. 31, no. 4. p.297.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259581518_All_change_in_Aloe_and_Haworthia
