

Renauldia lycopodioides Bizot ex Pócs

Status: **Endangered (EN)** B1,2c,d

Class: Bryopsida

Order: Bryales

Family: Pterobryaceae

Description and Biology: A spectacular moss creeping on tree branches. The stems are tail-like, usually little branched and hanging, arched in shape, and about 10cm long and 4mm thick. The leaves are ovate to panduriform, concave, with a short, often channeled apiculus. The capsules are yellow, almost sessile, and hang on branches.

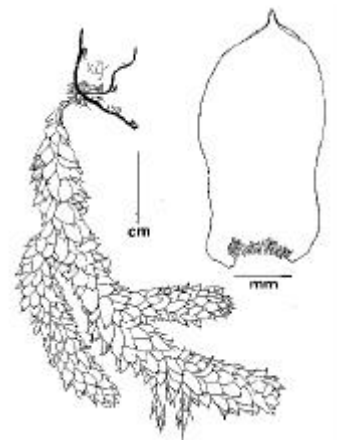
Distribution and Habitat: This plant is found in moist mossy elfin forest. It occurs only on trees, as a branch epiphyte. The sites are usually rich in other rare and interesting bryophytes, such as the Madagascan *Plagiochila drepanophylla* Sde-Lac. and the endemic *Neorutenbergia usagarae* (Dix.) Biz. et Pócs.

History and Outlook: This plant is endemic to Africa and was known for a long time only from one tree at its type locality of the Sagara Ridge, West Usambara Mountains, Tanzania. The type locality is along a path at the southern edge of the Forest Reserve of Sokoine University located close to Mazumbai research station. Outside this reserve trees are often collected and used for building poles or other purposes, and the species is seriously threatened. This plant was also found in a similar habitat in the West Usambara mountains, in Balangai West Forest Reserve, on the eastern ridge of Kilimandege at 1,700m alt., and on the ridge leading to Kwagoroto summit at 1,850–1,950m alt. All these localities fall within an area of 10km diameter, where large-scale deforestation is currently taking place. During the past 25 years 50% of the forest was converted into agricultural land.

Recently this species has been observed on two other mountains in the region: (a) the Ukaguru Mountains (Kilosa District) in the Mamiwa-Kisara (North) Forest Reserve where it is found in mossy elfin forest on the eastern part of Mamwira ridge at 2,200m a.s.l. This habitat is endangered, as the forest reserve (both north and east slopes) is seriously encroached upon perhaps due to the presence of a nearby working compound (Lovett and Pócs 1992); (b) the Uzungwe Mountains (Kilombero District). Here it is found in Mwanihana Forest Reserve in closed moist forest, at between 750 and 900m a.s.l., where the tree canopy is approximately 30m high. The species was collected by D.W. Thomas, 30 Aug. 1984, and described by B. Allen, 1990; illegal and high intensity logging was taking place near this locality. This habitat is located in an area that is soon to form part of the Uzungwe National Park, therefore its future protection of this species can hopefully be expected.

References: Bizot, M. 1974. Enumeratio muscorum novarum. *Revue Bryologique et Lichénologique* 40: 101–138; Kis, G. 1985. *Mosses of South-East Tropical Africa. An annotated list with distributional data.* Inst. Ecol. Bot. Hung. Acad. Sci., Vacratot. 170pp; Lovett, J.C. and Pócs, T. 1992. *Assessment of the Condition of the Catchment Forest Reserves.* Dar es Salaam, 362 pp.; Msangi, T.H. 1990. Management of nature reserves and catchment forests in the Usambaras. Pp 13–19. In: Hedberg, I. and Persson, E. (Eds). *Research for Conservation of Catchment Forests. Proceedings from a workshop held in Morogoro, Tanzania, March 13–17, 1989.* Reprocentralen, HSC, Uppsala 1990. (mimeographed).

Red Data sheet author: T. Pócs



The moss *Renauldia lycopodioides* Bizot ex Pócs. A. habit; B. leaf. Illustration drawn from the type specimen by G.Kis and T.Pócs.

Last updated: December 2000