

**Zeitschrift:** Candollea : journal international de botanique systématique = international journal of systematic botany  
**Herausgeber:** Conservatoire et Jardin botaniques de la Ville de Genève  
**Band:** 18 (1962-1963)

**Artikel:** Typha elephantina Roxb. in Egypt  
**Autor:** Boulos, Loufty  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-880366>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 01.04.2026

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

## **Typha elephantina Roxb. in Egypt**

by

Loufty BOULOS

National Research Centre, Cairo

---

The genus *Typha* was earlier known to be represented in Egypt by two species, viz. *T. australis* Schum. et Thonn. which is common throughout irrigation channels, and *T. latifolia* L. which is very rare and restricted only to Wadi Natroun, where it grows mixed with *T. australis* around the soda lakes peculiar to that place.

It was recorded from Wadi Natroun by Général ANDRÉOSSY (1823) who was a member of Napoleon's expedition to Egypt. After him it was entirely forgotten and was not even mentioned by ASCHERSON & SCHWEINFURTH



FIG. 42. — A mixed stand of *Typha elephantina* (left) and *T. australis*.



FIG. 43. — Dense basal tufts of *T. elephantina*. In the forefront are: *Cyperus laevigatus* and *Sonchus maritimus*.

(1889) in their enumeration of Egyptian plants, although that list was meant to give a complete account of what was growing in Egypt. The plant was rediscovered in Wadi Natroun by SICKENBERGER (1901). Later it is frequently mentioned by authors dealing with the Egyptian flora (MUSCHLER, 1912; STOCKER, 1927; SIMPSON, 1930, 1937; TÄCKHOLM & DRAR, 1941; TÄCKHOLM & al., 1956).

There are also two uncertain records from outside Wadi Natroun. FIGARI (1864) records it from the Nile delta in the area between Rosetta, Damietta and Qaliub. There is also a record from Marmarica by ROBECCHI-BRICCHETTI (1890), quoted by SCHWEINFURTH & al. (1893). These records are doubtful, and there is no confirmation of its occurrence in any locality outside Wadi Natroun.

During two successive excursions to Wadi Natroun in late August and in early October 1960, Professor Vivi TÄCKHOLM and the writer had the occasion to study *T. latifolia* more carefully in its natural habitat around the soda lakes. During the first excursion it was in full anthesis, and the striking length of its spadix (up to 90 cm) led us to suspect that we had to deal, not with *T. latifolia* of European concept, but with another species. A rich collection was made, and it was then observed that the leaves were keeled, another feature which did not agree with European material.

On our return a more thorough examination of the material was made and it was found to be *T. elephantina* Roxb., a species which has its main distribution in India and has also been found once in Algeria (see fig. 42-46).

According to GRAEBNER (1900) the only known species with keeled leaves is *T. elephantina*. Moreover, our specimens tally fully with his description.

The presence of *Typha elephantina* in Egypt is most interesting from a geographical point of view because it constitutes a link between India and Algeria and provides a better explanation of its occurrence in the latter country.

*Typha elephantina* grows mixed with *T. australis* in dense thickets around the lakes. The two species, however, are easily distinguished from each other, even at a distance. *T. elephantina* is taller, more robust and its inflorescences project like sticks above the foliage. The plants are frequently associated with *Berula erecta* (Huds.) Cov., *Samolus valerandi* L., *Cyperus laevigatus* L., *Sonchus maritimus* L., *Lemna gibba* L., and other marsh plants.

GRAEBNER (1900) places *T. elephantina* in the Section *Bracteolata* Kronf. and gives the following references and synonyms:



FIG. 44. — Inside the *T. elephantina* zone, with prominent keeled leaves, growing along with *Cyperus laevigatus* and *Berula erecta*.

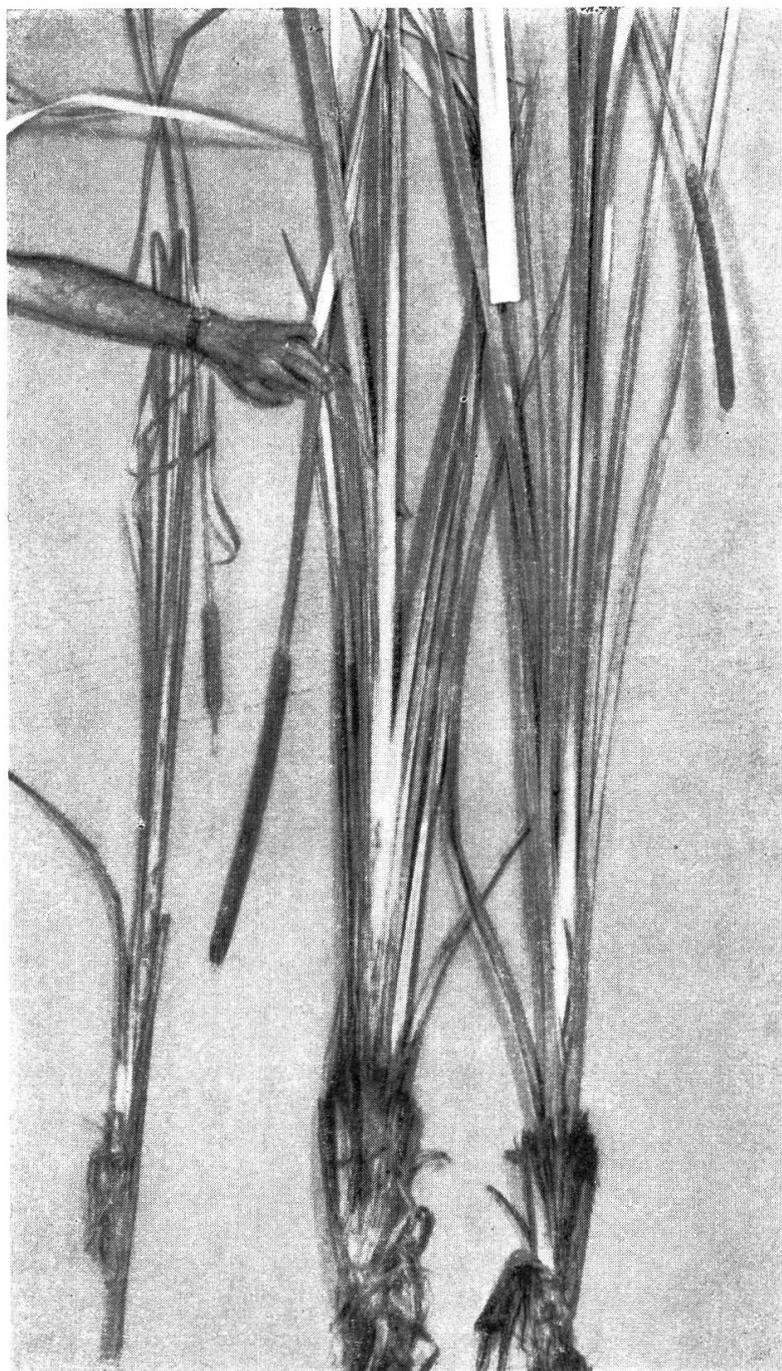


FIG. 45. — *Typha australis* (left) and *T. elephantina* (right). Scale = 40 cm.

**T. elephantina** Roxb. *Fl. Ind.* 3:566. 1832; Schnizl. *Typhac.*: 26; Kronfeld, *Verh. Zool. Bot. Ges. Wien* 39:165. 1889 = *T. latifolia* Edgew. *Journ. Linn. Soc.* 6:194. 1862, non L. = *T. maresii* Batt. *Bull. Soc. Bot. Fr.* 34:389. 1887.

*DISTR.* ASIA: In India from Calcutta to Western Himalaya, to Peshawar and Kulu. AFRICA: Algeria in a marsh at Boufarik (BATTANDIER, *l.c.*; KRONFELD, *l.c.*: 166). BATTANDIER & TRABUT (1902), however, mention Khodjaberry as the only locality in Algeria.

HOOKE (1893) and GRAEBNER (1900) give the following details about the plant:

*Stem* 2-4 m. *Leaves* 2,5-4 cm broad, trigonous above the sheath, margins often undulate above the middle. *Flowers* bracteolate, pedicels 0,5-1 mm; ♂ spike 20-30 cm, rachis clothed with short, often forked, dirty-white, obtuse hairs; bracts 3 or more; anthers 1-5, 2,5 mm long; pollen 4-globose; ♀ spike much shorter, 15-25 by 0,8-2,5 cm; flowers mixed with clavate pistillodes; bracteoles with fasciate tips, much longer than the hairs, which are shorter than the stigmas.

In the Egyptian material collected, the rhizome is ringed, 35 mm across, rooting at the nodes, roots cylindrical, up to 7 mm across. Leaves densely distichous at base, 2,5-3 m long with blunt tip and a sharp keel which is fading in the uppermost 50 cm of the blade although clearly visible. The blade is in the average 2 cm broad, varying in thickness from almost papery near the apex to 5 mm thick along the keel. Sheaths keeled, with linear brown spots inside, up to 60 cm long, 7 cm broad, in the broadest place. Scape from its base to the beginning of the inflorescence 2,4 m, tapering smoothly in breadth from 15 mm below to 7-9 mm at apex. Male and female spadix confluent, together up to 90 cm long, the female 36-57 cm long, 20-25 mm broad; the male 33 cm long, 20 mm broad. During anthesis the male spadix is by far broader than the female, but afterwards the female rapidly increases in thickness.

Conclusion: We may safely remove *Typha latifolia* from the Egyptian flora and replace it by *T. elephantina*.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ASCHERSON, P. & SCHWEINFURTH, G. 1889. Illustration de la Flore d'Égypte. *Mém. Inst. Egypt.* 2:1. Suppl. 2:2, printed 1887 but appearing as a volume 1889.
- ANDRÉOSSY, Le Général. 1823. Mémoire sur la vallée des lacs de Natroun et celle du fleuve sans eau. *Description de l'Égypte*, ed. 2, 12. Paris.
- BATTANDIER, J. A. & TRABUT, L. 1909. *Flore Analytique et Synoptique de l'Algérie et de la Tunisie*: 318. Alger.
- FIGARI, A. 1864. *Studii Scientifici sull'Egitto e sue Adiacenze* 1:225. 1864-65. Lucca.

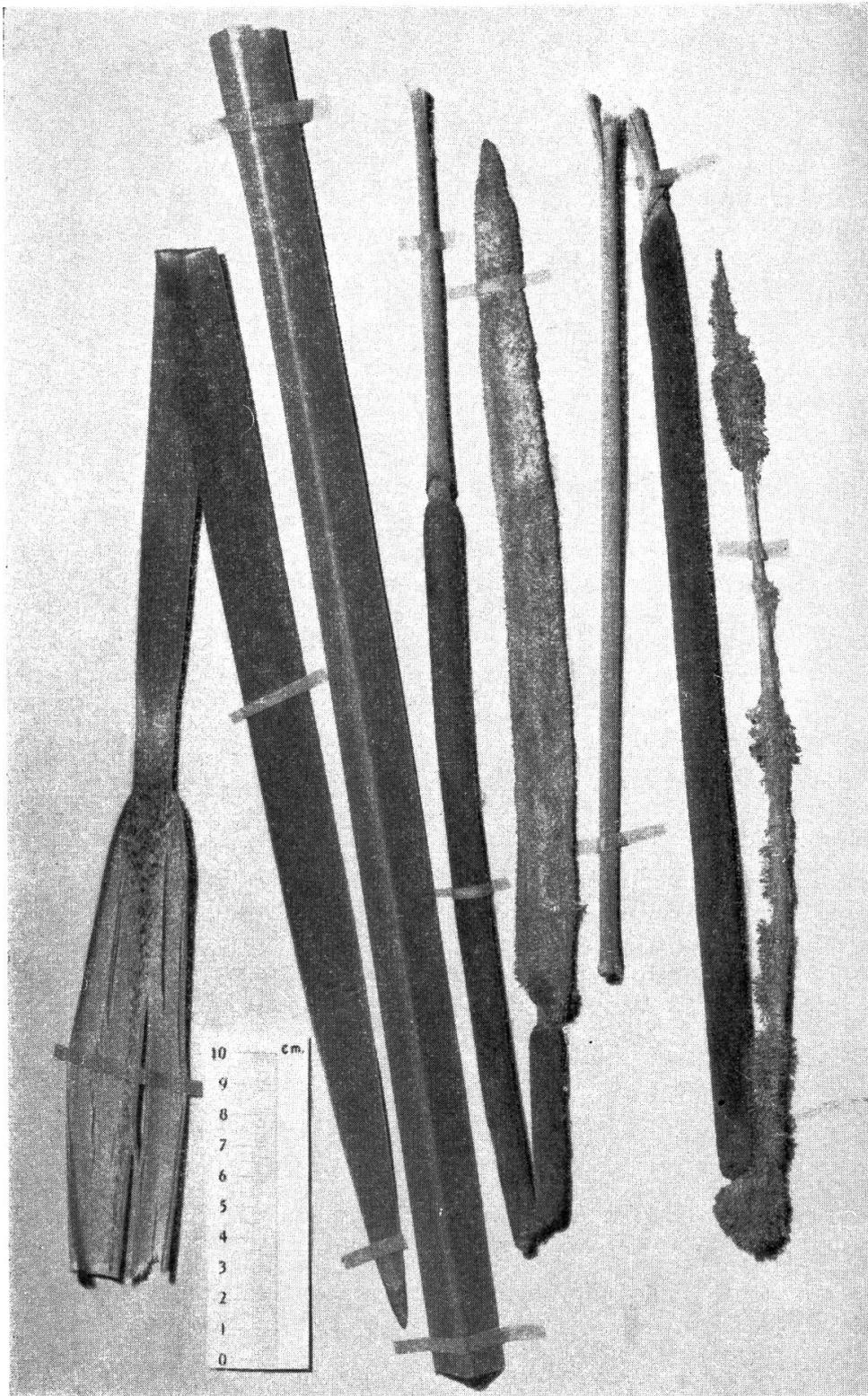


FIG. 46. — A herbarium specimen of *T. elephantina*, collected from Wadi Natroun.

- GRAEBNER, P. 1900. Typhaceae. *Pflanzenreich* **4/8**:11.
- HOOKE, J. D. 1893. *Flora of British India* **6**:488-89. London.
- MUSCHLER, R. 1912. *A Manual Flora of Egypt* **1**:10. Berlin.
- ROBECCHI-BRICCHETTI, L. 1890. *All' Oasi di Giove Ammone*. Milano (Quoted by Schweinfurth & al., non vidi).
- SCHWEINFURTH, G., ASCHERSON, P. & TAUBERT, P. 1893. Primitiae Florae Marmaricae. *Bull. Herb. Boiss.* **1**:669.
- SICKENBERGER, E. 1901. Contribution à la flore d'Égypte. *Mém. Inst. Egypt.* **4**:288.
- SIMPSON, N.D. 1930. Some supplementary records to Muschler's Manual Flora of Egypt. *Min. Agric. Egypt, Bull.* **93**:2, Cairo.
- 1937. A report on the weed flora of the irrigation channels in Egypt. *Min. Publ. Works* **15**:45. Cairo.
- STOCKER, O. 1927. Das Wadi Natrun in G. Karsten et K. Schenck: *Vegetationsbilder* **18**. Reihe **1**, tab. 1 with text.
- TÄCKHOLM, V. and G. & DRAR, M. 1941. *Flora of Egypt* **1**. *Bull. Fac. Sc. Fouad I Univ.* **17**:89-90. Cairo.
- TÄCKHOLM, V., DRAR, M. & FADEEL, A. A. 1956. *Students' Flora of Egypt*: 589. Cairo.

