Abstract

*Gnidia* L., also known as the saffron bush, is the largest genus in the family Thymelaeaceae, consisting of about 140 species. It is mainly an African group with approximately 97 species in southern Africa and one third of the species occurring in the Cape Floristic Region. Hilliard and Burtt last revised *Gnidia* in 1987. Species delimitations within the genus are extremely complex and have led to varying treatments often characterised by substantial confusion in the ranking of some taxa. This study has utilised DNA sequence data to help resolve species delimitations within *Gnidia*. Parsimony analyses were conducted on nuclear transcribed spacer (ITS) and non-coding plastid *trnL-F* and *rbcL* data from a broad sampling of *Gnidia* and related genera. The most important conclusion drawn from the molecular data is that *Gnidia* is not monophyletic and comprises at least four distinct lineages, each related to other genera within Thymelaeoideae.