



## Typification of ornamental plants: *Musa textilis* (Musaceae)

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### *Musa textilis* Née. *Anales Ci. Nat.* 4: 123 (1801)

Neotype (designated here): Philippines, Luzon, Sorsogon Province, Mt. Bulusan, A.D.E. Elmer 17106 (BM! 2 sheets).

The Manila hemp or abacá, *Musa textilis*, was described by Née (1801), with the mention that it is native to the Philippines, without providing a type. The description was however not sufficient to accurately distinguish it from other related species. In fact it appears that he intended to include all fibre producing bananas: ‘que es la única especie de *Musa* que da fibras útiles para tantos artefactos, me parece que deberá distinguirse de las otras, llamándola en lo sucesivo *Musa textilis*’ (Née, 1801: 129). The collections of Née have been deposited in Madrid (MA), some specimens are also at B, C, FI and NY (Stafleu & Cowan, 1981), but unfortunately there are no *Musa* specimens known in Née’s collection. It appears from the diagnosis that Née did not have an actual plant at hand or definitely in mind, making the application of the name problematic. It is currently understood that there are more than a single species of fibre producing bananas; most known is probably the Japanese fibre banana, ‘ito-bashō’, *Musa balbisiana* Colla (1820: 384) var. *liukiensis* (Matsum.) Häkkinen in Häkkinen & Väre (2008: 91) that is widely used in the subtropical islands of Japan.

Copeland (1927) provided a historical overview of the known descriptions and discussed the application of the name. However, he does not designate a specimen to be the type. Copeland states also that the *Musa silvestris* Pissang Utan of Rumphius (1747) from the Moluccan islands may be similar, and Née cited this, but his ‘principal concern was to describe a Luzon plant as a species essentially new to systematic botany’. Reference to Rumphius is incidental in Née’s article. Colla (1820) takes up the name *Musa sylvestris*, and applies it to Mindanao, even though Rumphius states that the plants in Mindanao look substantially different than those in Ambon (Rumphius 1747: 139). Copeland (1927) however believed that *Musa textilis* was described from Luzon (near the village of Nabua).

Cheesman (1949) provided an excellent description with images, but also did not designate any specimen as the type. His treatment did result however in a more precise application of the name *Musa textilis*. Cheesman stated ‘that whatever Née’s type may have been, and however mixed the material on Philippine plantations, the name *Musa textilis* as generally used today outside the Philippines is attached to one particular species, quite well defined in major characters. This species has been introduced from the Philippines and grown in botanic gardens and experiment stations all round the tropics, and is the entity with which we are here concerned’. He thus overrules the heterogeneity of Née’s description and fixes the name *M. textilis* to its current modern usage.

No type has previously been selected and the Natural History Museum (BM) holds a specimen (mounted on two sheets) that is relatively well-preserved, was collected in southern Luzon (quite near the village mentioned by Née), and I am certain this will suffice for the correct application of the name. Most importantly it will not cause any change to the current usage of the name.

Most previous authors have assumed the species to be native to the Philippines and since long cultivated there. Currently we think this economically important species may be native to Borneo, because this island is