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Linnaeus's *Plantæ Surinamenses* revisited

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Abstract

In 1775, Jacob Alm defended the Linnaean dissertation *Plantæ Surinamenses* under the presidency of Carolus Linnaeus. In this account of Surinamese plants preserved in alcohol, given to Linnaeus by the King Gustavus III of Sweden, 148 species were treated, 117 of them with species names determined. Fifteen other species were indicated as new, but were neither described nor named, and 16 species were identified only to genus level. Here, the taxonomic identity and nomenclatural status of those names are updated and discussed. Five of the 117 names and also 11 of their synonyms, a species name described by Rottbøll and ten described by Linnaeus filius are lectotypified. Two new combinations and a new name are proposed, and two new synonyms are established.

Key words: Carolus Linnaeus, Suriname, Carl Gustaf Dahlberg, Daniel Rolander, taxonomy, lectotypification, nomenclature

Resumo

Em 1775, Jacob Alm defendeu a dissertação Linneana *Plantæ Surinamenses* sob a presidência de Carolus Linnaeus. Nessa exposição de plantas surinamenses conservadas em álcool, dadas a Linnaeus pelo Rei Gustavo III da Suécia, 148 espécies foram tratadas, 117 delas com nomes específicos determinados. Outras 15 espécies foram indicadas como novas, mas não foram descritas nem nomeadas, e 16 foram identificadas até o nível de gênero. A identidade taxonômica e o estado nomenclatural desses nomes são aqui atualizados e discutidos. Cinco dos 117 nomes e também 11 de suas sinonímias, uma espécie descrita por Rottbøll e 10 espécies descritas por Linnaeus filius, são lectotipificados. Duas novas combinações e um nome novo são propostos, bem como dois novos sinônimos são estabelecidos.

Introduction

All information available to Linnaeus about Surinamese plants at the time of publication of the first edition of *Species Plantarum* (1753) was restricted to *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium* by the German painter, Maria Sybilla Merian (1705) of which he owned a copy. This work portrayed food plants of insects that were, however, the primary focus of the book (Jarvis 2005). As pointed out by Stearn (1982), Linnaeus was well-acquainted with Merian's work, which he cited in the synonymy of a number of species in his *Species Plantarum* (1753), namely: her plate 8 under *Plumeria rubra* (*Sp. Pl.* 1: 209–210), plate 13 under *Spondias mombin* (*Sp. Pl.* 1: 371), plate 16 under *Anacardium occidentale* (*Sp. Pl.* 1: 383), plate 21 under *Passiflora laurifolia* (*Sp. Pl.* 2: 956), plate 22 under *Amaryllis belladonna* (*Sp. Pl.* 1: 293), plate 25 under *Epidendrum vanilla* (*Sp. Pl.* 2: 952), plate 26 under *Theobroma cacao* (*Sp. Pl.* 2: 782), plate 31 under *Hibiscus mutabilis* (*Sp. Pl.* 2: 694), plate 36 under *Costus arabicus* (*Sp. Pl.* 1: 2), plate 42 under *Hibiscus abelmoschus* (*Sp. Pl.* 2: 696), plate 45 under *Poinciana pulcherrima* (*Sp. Pl.* 1: 380), and plate 58 under *Cassia alata* (*Sp. Pl.* 1: 378). Rarely, other plants from Suriname had been known in Europe prior to the illustrations by Merian. One example of that is *Dracontium polyphyllum* (Linnaeus 1753: 967, 1763a: 1372), a plant quoted as introduced into Holland at least as early as 1689 by Hermann (1689: 315, 1698: 93, t. 15), which was later repeated by Kiggelaer (1690), Plukenet (1692: t. 149, fig. 1, 1696: 52), and Linnaeus (1737: 434). Another instance is *Holosteum cordatum* Linnaeus (1753: 88), which was first described by Hermann (1698: 11, t. 5).