



Twins are not alone: a recircumscription of *Linnaea* (Caprifoliaceae)

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Abstract

The genus *Linnaea* is reviewed and expanded to include the genera *Abelia* (excluding section *Zabelia*), *Diabelia*, *Dipelta*, *Kolkwitzia* and *Vesalea*, making it monophyletic and comprising 16 species. The history of the generic name is discussed. An updated description for the genus *Linnaea* is provided and new combinations or names for all taxa are provided in *Linnaea*.

Key words: botanical history, genus concepts, inflorescence structure

Introduction

Linnaea borealis Gronovius ex Linnaeus (1753: 631) was named in honour of Carolus Linnaeus to whom we owe the system of binomial nomenclature. The name was first coined by Dutch botanist Jan Frederik Gronovius (in Linnaeus 1737), because it was Linnaeus's favourite plant '*Planta nostra*', which was later adopted by Linnaeus himself in his *Species plantarum* (1753). It is currently restricted to a single species, which may be considered unfortunate, because it honours such an important botanist. Ricket (1941) wrote that 'Linnaeus regarded it as his solemn duty to perpetuate the names of great botanists in generic names', and even though at the time it was argued that there often is no connection between the name and the botanist, 'there will be such charm in the association that it will never fade from memory'. Ricket (1941) provided the following example: '*Linnaea* was named by the celebrated Gronovius and is a plant of Lapland, lowly, insignificant, disregarded, flowering but for a brief space—from Linnaeus who resembles it'. This was of course meant ironically, but the name of Linnaeus was perpetuated in the name for the flower in several languages, and Linnaeus used the flower in his coat of arms after his knighthood and was frequently depicted with *Linnaea*.

Brown (1818) described some new plants in Abel Clarke's 'Narrative of a Journey in the Interior of China', where he named a particular ornamental shrub in honour of the traveller: *Abelia* Brown (1818: 376). Martens & Galeotti (1843) described two species from Oaxaca, Mexico, which they placed in their new genus *Vesalea* Martens & Galeotti (1843: 242), but they stated that the new genus has affinity with Brown's *Abelia*. Vatke (1872) proposed several *Abelia* species be treated in *Linnaea*, because of their similarity in flower structure. In his series of new plants from Asia, Maximowicz (1878) described the genus *Dipelta* Maximowicz (1878: 50), but among other Caprifoliaceae he observed similarities with *Abelia*. *Dipelta* was described on the basis of having two accrescent bracts beneath the flowers that become wing-like in fruit, but species of *Abelia* and *Linnaea* also have such bracts, although not always as conspicuous and not necessarily morphologically equivalent (Landrein & Prenner 2013). When describing the new genus *Kolkwitzia*, Graebner (in Diels 1901: 593) pointed out that his new genus has clear morphological similarity to *Linnaea*, but was maintained separate from that genus on the basis of the fruit characteristics. In the same paper Graebner (in Diels 1901: 593) transferred many *Abelia* species to *Linnaea*, which was continued by Diels (1912). Wittrock (1907) focussed on the species *Linnaea borealis*, which he concluded was a polymorphic