

NOMENCLATURAL NOTES ON *CHORISANDRA* WIGHT

BY

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The Euphorbiaceous genus *Chorisandra* was first erected by Robert Wight in 1853 (Figures of Indian Plants, Vol. VI. text. fig. 1994) and commented that ".....as a genus I feel certain it is not taken up". The genus consists of only one species *Chorisandra pinnata* Wight. But, Mueller Argoviensis reduced Wight's *Chorisandra pinnata* to a synonym of *Phyllanthus wightianus* Muell. Arg. (in *Linnaea*, Vol. 32, Page 6, 1863) in a section of the genus *Phyllanthus* named as *Chorisandra* [cited in De Candolle's *Prodr.* 15 (2), 1866]. Mueller Argoviensis' name is confusing as the very name *P. wightianus* was used by him in the same issue of the same journal to refer to another plant which has *Reidia floribunda* Wight as its synonym [in *Linnaea*, Vol. 32, Page 47, 1863; cited in De Candolle, *Prodr.* 15 (2), 1866]. In so doing, Muell. Arg.'s name *P. wightianus* is not only illegitimate in ignoring prior specific epithet of Wight but also misleading in that it created more problems than solved.

Gamble (in *Indian Forester*, 131-132, 1901) endorsed the name *P. wightianus* Muell. Arg. in his letter entitled "A Madras *Phyllanthus* overlooked". He added that this species was not to be found in Hooker's "Flora of British India". But Gamble's statement is only partly correct because a reference to *Chorisandra pinnata* is indeed found in Hooker's flora of British India. Hooker in *Flora of British India* (V 328, 1885) and following him Cooke in *Flora of the Presidency of Bombay* (III, 77, 1958, reprinted edition) treated this as a synonym of *Flueggea microcarpa* Blume.

In the same volume of the *Indian Forester* (1901; on page 288) Barber in an article entitled "A new *Phyllanthus* in Madras" made some interesting observations. He recorded this plant in Vizag District. He stated that Hooker's inclusion of this group in *Flueggea* is wrong but did not elaborate. He coined a new name *Phyllanthus chorisandra* to be applied to *Chorisandra pinnata* Wight as this will avoid confusion but at the same time emphasise the peculiarities of the plant. Mueller Argoviensis's specific epithet *Wightianus* may be completely dropped as it is assigned to two clearly different plants. Barber cited that the name *Phyllanthus wightianus* of Muell. Arg. [*Linnaea*, 32 : 47, 1863; cited in De Candolle, *Prodr.* 15 (2), 1866] really refers to the *Reidia* group and the correct name should read as *Phyllanthus obliquus* as to be found in Wallich's Catalogue, 7947 (mentioned in Barber's paper, 1901). In spite of all this, Gamble in his *Flora of the Madras Presidency* (II : page 899, 1956, reprinted edition) again restored a generic status to *Chorisandra* considering it as distinct from *Phyllanthus* from which it differs in its dioecious condition and the androecium of six free stamens. However, Webster (*J. Arn. Arbor.* Vol. XXXVIII,

Page 51-52, 1957) made a new combination going back to the original, specific epithet *pinnatus* of Wight. He called it as *Phyllanthus pinnatus* (Wight) Webster comb. nov.

The plants, exclusively Indian, occur abundantly in Visakhapatnam and elsewhere in Andhra Pradesh, South India from where the present writers hail. After tentatively identifying this plant as *Chorisandra pinnata* Wight based on Gamble's Flora of Madras Presidency, a survey of the nomenclatural history has been made and all the controversial points enumerated above, have come to light.

The generic name *Chorisandra* (of Wight) in Euphorbiaceae must become invalid as the name is preoccupied by a cyperaceous genus *Chorisandra* of Robert Brown which appears to be an orthographic variant of *Chorisandra* and the retention of this name becomes more superfluous by its indiscriminate usage (cited in Willis, 7th edn., revised by H K Airyshaw, 1966).

Barber's rejection of Hooker's synonymy of *Chorisandra pinnata* with *Flueggea microcarpa* also is corroborated by a comparison of the morphological features of both these species. In *Flueggea microcarpa* the leaves are 1-3" long, stamens 3-5 with a pistillode, the pedicels of the female flowers are rarely $\frac{1}{4}$ " long and flowering season is during May-June; whereas *Chorisandra pinnata* is characterised by leaves less than 1" long, male flowers with six free stamens and without a pistillode, pedicels of the female flowers 1-1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " long and flowering season is between February-July.

The next problem is with what specific epithet this species should rightly be referred to under the genus *Phyllanthus*. Choice is between two *Phyllanthus chorisandra* of Barber which retains the original generic epithet of Wight as specific epithet and *Phyllanthus pinnatus* (Wight) Webster comb. nov. In a personal communication Webster mentioned that he revived the original specific epithet of Wight in marking this new combination and that the last word about it has not yet been said. However as far as the present study and available evidence goes the new combination of *Phyllanthus pinnatus* (Wight) Webster suits the situation better than the various alternatives proposed.

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SUMMARY

A probe into the nomenclatural history of the Euphorbiaceous genus *Chorisandra* Wight, revealed that it has been treated variously as a separate genus (Gamble), as a species under the genus *Phyllanthus* (Mueller Argoviensis, Webster)

and as synonymous with *Flueggea microcarpa* (Hooker in FBI). The paper concludes, that on available grounds, detailed in the text, the genus should be considered as a part of *Phyllanthus*.

कोरिसैंडण्डा वाइट के नामकरण सम्बन्धी टिप्पणी
लेखक पीरट्ला एन० राव० व डी० सर्वेश्वर राव

सारांश

एरण्डकुलीय प्रजाति कोरिसैंडण्डा वाइट के नामकरण इतिहास की पड़ताल करने पर पता चला कि उसमें इसे भिन्न-भिन्न तरह से, कहीं अलग प्रजाति (गैम्बल), वहीं फायलैन्थस प्रजाति के अन्तर्गत एक जाति (म्यूलर, आर्गोवियसिस, वेबस्टर), कहीं फ्लुग्गिया माइक्रोकार्पा का पूर्व नाम (फ्लोरा आफ ब्रिटिश इण्डिया में हुकर) मानकर वर्णित किया गया है। इस अभिपत्र का निष्कर्ष है कि उपलब्ध आधारों पर, जिन्हें इसकी पाठ्य सामग्री में बताया गया है, इस प्रजाति को फायलैन्थस का अंश स्वीकार किया जाना चाहिए।

Namengebung e Bemerkungen auf *Chorisandra* Wight

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Eine Suche auf namengebung e Geschichte der euphorbiaceische Gattung *Chorisandra* Wight, offenharte daß die mannigfaltig beschrieben hat, als eine getrennte Gattung Gamble), als eine Art der Gattung *Phyllanthus* (Müller, Argoviensis, Webster) und als das Synonym der *Flueggea microcarpa* (Hooker im FBI). Der Artikel beschließt daß an verfügbaren Gründen, im Text gegeben, die Gattung als einen Teil der *Phyllanthus* betrachten soll.

Notes relatives à la nomenclature du genre *Chorisandra* Wight

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Résumé

Une étud relative à l'histoire de la nomenclature du genre *Chorisandra* wight de la famillier des Euphorbiacées a révélé qu'on l'a considéré d'une façon différente dans le temps—Comme un genre unique (Gamble), comme une espèce du genre *Phyllanthus* (*Mueller argoviensis* Webster) et comme un synonyme de *Flueggea microcarpa* (Hooker in FBI). On concludé, sur la base des renseignements disponibles, dont les details se trouvent dans le texte de cet article, que ce genre soit rentermé per *Phyllanthus*.