

THE IDENTITY OF *TRIGONELLA UPENDRAE* CHOWDHERY &
R.R. RAO (FABACEAE)

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A B S T R A C T

The critical study of the type specimens of *Trigonella upendrae* shows that it is neither a *TRIGONELLA*, nor a new taxon in Leguminosae. It is a *MEDICAGO* belonging to *M. sativa* and therefore, treated here as its synonym.

Trigonella upendrae Chowdhery & R.R. Rao was described by Chowdhery and Rao (1992) based on a collection of K.P. Janardhanan (47716A, B, C) from Pangi village in Kinnaur Dist. of Himachal Pradesh. They considered the new species to be most closely related to *Trigonella corniculata* (L.) L. A critical examination of type specimens of *T. upendrae* Chowdhery & R.R. Rao revealed that these specimens do not belong to the genus *TRIGONELLA* L. Usually, the genera *TRIGONELLA* L. and *MEDICAGO* L. are distinguished based on pod characters. The type specimens *Trigonella upendrae* lacked pods and therefore they inadvertently described a

new species. Recently, Small *et al.* (1987) used flower characters to differentiate these two genera *TRIGONELLA* L. and *MEDICAGO* L. The flower characters of *Trigonella upendrae* Chowdhery & R.R. Rao belong to the genus *MEDICAGO* L. and not to *TRIGONELLA* L.

A further study revealed that *T. upendrae* Chowdhery & R.R. Rao is not a new taxon in the genus *MEDICAGO* L. rather, it is a well established species *Medicago sativa* L. The allied species of *M. sativa* L. are *M. falcata* L. and *M. xvaria* Martyn which differ from each other in flowers colour and coiling of pods (*M. sativa* L. with yellow flowers and 2¼ to 3¼ coiled pods, *M. falcata* L.

with pink flowers and falcate pods and *M. xvaria* Martyn with yellow, pink or black flowers and $\frac{1}{2}$ or 1-coiled pods). Following the above observations *T. upendrae* Chowdhery & R.R. Rao is reduced here as synonym under *M. sativa* L.

Medicago sativa L., Sp. Pl. 778. 1753; Chowdhery in Chowdhery & Wadhwa, Fl. Himachal Pradesh 1: 216, 1984. Type : Described from Spain, Herb. Linn. 933/6 (LINN, microfiche!).

Trigonella upendrae Chowdhery & R.R. Rao in Bull. Bot. Surv. India 31: 156. 1992. Syn. Nov. Type : India : Himachal Pradesh, Kinnaur Dist. Pangi village near P.W.D. rest house, K.P. Janardhanan 47716 A (holo CAL!), 47716 B & C (ISO BSD!).

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