BULL. BOT. SURV. INDIA
Vol. 26, Nos. 1 & 2 : pp. 123-124, 1984

A NEW COMBINATION IN *CHIONANTHUS* (OLEACEAE) FROM SOUTHERN INDIA

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One of the unresolved nomenclatural problems of which I have been aware for some years has been the identity of *Forsythia mala-elengi* Dennst. This name was validly published by Dennstedt in his "Key" to Rheede tot Draakestein's Hortus Malabaricus, based on Rheede's *Mala Elengi* [Hort. Malab. 5 : 109, t. 55 (1685)]. No herbarium of Rheede's exists, so, for identification, one is restricted to his description and illustration and to knowledge of the plants of Malabar.

The most complete commentary on the Hortus Malabaricus is that by Buchanan-Hamilton and I had hoped that his comments on *Mala Elengi* might help in its identification. With the kind assistance of the Librarian at the Linnean Society of London I was able to examine the relevant part of Buchanan-Hamilton's manuscript [his published commentary stopped at volume 4 of the Hortus Malabaricus, see Trans. Linn. Soc. 17 : 147-252 (1835)]. It proved of little help, and although he says that he gave specimens of what he believed to be *Mala Elengi* to Sir James Edward Smith, a search of the Smith Herbarium at both the Linnean Society (LINN.) and at Liverpool (LIV) has failed to reveal them.

Professor K. S. Manilal of the University of Calicut, an authority on Hortus Malabaricus, has kindly assisted in correspondence. He informs me that in the local language *mala* means "mountain" and *elengi* is *Mimusop elengi* L., so that our plant is the mountain or "wild" *mimusops*. Professor Manilal also informs me that the localities from which Rheede obtained his plants, Beypin, Warapoli and Angicaimal are old names for places around Cochin. With this information, after comparison of the species of *Chionanthus* known from southern India with the plate in Hortus Malabaricus, I am convinced that there is only one species that fits.

From Rheede's plate, perhaps the most noticeable character of significance is the structure of the inflorescence, with the flowers clustered together at the end of distinct peduncles. Of the southern Indian species of *Chionanthus* (including *Linociera*) a similar inflorescence is found only in *C. malabaricus* (Wall ex. G Don) Beddome and *C. linocieroides* (Wight) Bennet & Raizada. The leaves of the latter, however, have more abruptly and distinctly acuminate apices ; also this species occurs in Tamil Nadu, outside the area from which Rheede obtained his plants. *C. malabaricus* has a more widespread distribution which includes the area around Cochin, where it probably grew in the past even if it is not perhaps found there today. Rheede's description, and the shape of the inflorescence and leaves in his plate fit, so I have no hesitation in identifying *Mala Elengi* with *C. malabaricus*.

Unfortunately for nomenclatural stability, Dennstaedt published *Forsythia mala-elengi* before Wallich's original basionym for

Date of receipt : 16.4.84. Date of acceptance : 3.9.84

C. malabaricus and a new combination is required.

Chionanthus mala-elengi (Dennst.) P. S. Green, *comb. nov.*

Forsythia mala-elengi Dennst., Schlüssel Hort. Malab. 12, 21 & 31 (1818); Manitz in Taxon, 17 : 500 (1968) ; Mabberley in Taxon 26 : 539 (1977). *Lectotype* : Rheede, Hort. Malab. 5 : t. 55 (1685); selected here.

Linociera malabarica Wall. ex G. Don, Gen. Syst. 4 : 53 (1837) ; Wight, Ic. Pl. Ind. Or. 4 (1) : 12, t. 1246 (1848) ; Clarke in Hook. J., Fl. Brit. Ind. 3 : 607 (1882). *Type* : *Wallich* 2828 (K—WAL).

C. malabaricus (Wall. ex G. Don) Beddome, For. Man. : cliv. & Fl. Sylv. : t. 239 (1872) ; Nair & Janardhanan in Journ. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc. 78 : 331 (1981) ; Srivastava in Journ. Ind. Bot. Soc. 60 : 361-362 (1981).