

## Rejection of Names

The process of selection of correct name for a taxon involves the identification of **illegitimate names**, those which do not satisfy the rules of botanical nomenclature. A legitimate name must not be rejected merely because it, or its epithet, is inappropriate or disagreeable, or because another is preferable or better known or because it has lost its original meaning. The name *Scilla peruviana* L. (1753) is not to be rejected merely because the species does not grow in Peru. Any one or more of the following situations leads to the rejection of a name:

- ❖ ***Nomen nudum*** (abbreviated ***nom. nud.***): A name with no accompanying description.

Many names published by Wallich in his *Catalogue* (abbreviated *Wall. Cat.*) published in 1812 were ***nomen nudum***. These were either validated by another author at a later date by providing a description (e.g. *Cerasus cornuta* Wall. *ex* Royle) or if by that time the name has already been used for another species by some other author, the ***nomen nudum*** even if validated is rejected and a new name has to be found (e.g. *Quercus dilatata* Wall., a ***nom. nud.*** rejected and replaced by *Q. himalayana* Bahadur, 1972).

- ❖ Name not effectively published, not properly formulated, lacking typification or without a Latin diagnosis.
- ❖ **Tautonym**: Whereas the Zoological Code allows binomials with identical generic name and specific epithet (e.g. *Bison bison*), such names in Botanical nomenclature constitute **tautonyms** (e.g. *Malus malus*) and are rejected.

The words in the tautonym are exactly identical, and evidently names such as *Cajanus cajan* or *Sesbania sesban* are not tautonyms and thus legitimate. Repetition of a specific epithet in an infraspecific epithet does not constitute a tautonym but a legitimate **autonym** (e.g. *Acacia nilotica* ssp. *nilotica*).

- ❖ **Later homonym**: Just as a taxon should have one correct name, the Code similarly does not allow the same name to be used for two different species (or taxa). Such, if existing, constitute **homonyms**. The one published at an earlier date is termed the **earlier homonym** and that at a later date as the **later homonym**. The Code rejects later homonyms even if the earlier homonym is illegitimate. *Ziziphus jujuba* Lam., 1789 had long been used as the correct name for the cultivated fruit jujube. This, however, was ascertained to be a later homonym of a related species *Z. jujuba* Mill., 1768. The binomial *Z. jujuba* Lam., 1789 is thus rejected and jujube correctly named as *Z. mauritiana* Lam., 1789. Similarly, although the earliest name for almonds is *Amygdalus communis* L., 1753 when transferred to the genus *Prunus* the name *Prunus communis* (L.)

- ❖ **Later isonym:** When the same name, based on the same type, has been published independently at different times by different authors, then only the earliest of these so-called ‘isonyms’ has nomenclatural status. The name is always to be cited from its original place of valid publication, and later ‘isonyms’ may be disregarded.

**Example**—Baker (1892) and Christensen (1905) independently published the name *Alsophila kalbreyeri* as a substitute for *A. podophylla* Baker (1891) non Hook. (1857). As published by Christensen, *Alsophila kalbreyeri* is a later ‘isonym’ of *A. kalbreyeri* Baker, without nomenclatural status.

- ❖ **Nomen superfluum** (abbreviated as **nom. superfl.**): A name is illegitimate and must be rejected when it was nomenclaturally superfluous when published, i.e., if the taxon to which it was applied—as circumscribed by its author—included the type of a name or epithet which ought to have been adopted under the rules.

**Example**—*Physkium natans* Lour., 1790 thus when transferred to the genus *Vallisneria*, the epithet *natans* should have been retained but de Jussieu used the name *Vallisneria physkium* Juss., 1826 a name which becomes superfluous. The species has accordingly been named correctly as *Vallisneria natans* (Lour.) Hara, 1974. A combination based on a superfluous name is also illegitimate.

*Picea excelsa* (Lam.) Link is illegitimate since it is based on a superfluous name *Pinus excelsa* Lam., 1778 for *Pinus abies* Linn., 1753. The legitimate combination under *Picea* is thus *Picea abies* (Linn.) Karst., 1880.

- ❖ **Nomen ambiguum** (abbreviated as **nom. ambig.**): A name is rejected if it is used in a different sense by different authors and has become a source of persistent error. The name *Rosa villosa* L. is rejected because it has been applied to several different species and has become a source of error.
- ❖ **Nomen confusum** (abbreviated as **nom. confus.**): A name is rejected if it is based on a type consisting of two or more entirely discordant elements, so that it is difficult to select a satisfactory lectotype.

**Example**—The characters of the genus *Actinotinus*, for example, were derived from two genera *Viburnum* and *Aesculus*, owing to the insertion of the inflorescence of *Viburnum* in the terminal bud of an *Aesculus* by a collector. The name *Actinotinus* must, therefore, be abandoned.

- ❖ **Nomen dubium** (abbreviated as **nom. dub.**): A name is rejected if it is dubious, i.e. it is of uncertain application because it is impossible to establish the taxon to which it should be referred. Linnaeus (1753) attributed the name

Example–*Rhinanthus crista-galli* to a group of several varieties, which he later described under separate names, rejecting the name *R. crista-galli* L. Several later authors, however, continued to use this name for diverse occasions until Schwarz (1939) finally listed this as ***Nomen dubium***, and the name was finally rejected.

❖ **Name based on monstrosity:** A name must be rejected if it is based on a monstrosity.

Example– The generic name *Uropedium* Lindl., 1846 was based on a monstrosity of the species now referred to as *Phragmidium caudatum* (Lindl.) Royle, 1896. The generic name *Uropedium* Lindl. must, therefore, be rejected. The name *Ornithogallum fragiferum* Vill., 1787, is likewise, based on a monstrosity and thus should be rejected.

Ref. : Plant Systematics by Gurucharan Singh.