

(2015) Proposal to conserve the name *Morinda citrifolia* (Rubiaceae) with a conserved type

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(2015) *Morinda citrifolia* L., Sp. Pl.: 176. 1 Mai 1753 [Dicot: Rub.], nom. cons. prop.

Typus: Sri Lanka, Southern Prov., Galle Distr., Galle Road, 34/7 Magonna, Oct. 05 1974, *Tirvengadam 624* (K!; isotypi: L, PDA), typ. cons. prop.

Morinda citrifolia L. is one of the three species that Linnaeus (Sp. Pl.: 176. 1753) included in his genus *Morinda* L. In the protologue of *M. citrifolia*, he provided the phrase name (diagnosis), “*Morinda arborea, pedunculis solitariis*”, which is uninformative with respect to characters that distinguish *M. citrifolia* and many other species of *Morinda* sensu Razafimandimbison & al. (in Molec. Phylog. Evol. 52: 879–886. 2009). The original elements that contributed to Linnaeus’s concept of *M. citrifolia* included: a plate of *Coda-pilava* in H.A. van Rheede’s *Hortus Indicus Malabaricus* (Hort. Malab. 1: 97, Fig. 52. 1678), a reference to J. Ray’s *Historiae Plantarum* (Raj. Hist. 2: 1442. 1693), and a reference to Linnaeus’s own *Flora Zeylanica* (Fl. Zeyl.: 82. 1747). The *Flora Zeylanica* entry is based on the drawings and specimens in Paul Hermann’s herbarium now at the BM. It contains three drawings of *Morinda* (Volume 5, folios 16, 182 & 336), which are taxonomically diverse. The drawing of the folio 336 and the illustration of *Morinda* in Rheede’s publication (l.c.) represent the nutraceutical, large-fruited form of *M. citrifolia* as currently and widely known by botanists. The drawings of the folios 16 and 182 are not identifiable. There are no specimens of *Morinda* referable to “*Morinda arborea, pedunculis solitariis*” in Hermann’s herbarium. The only potentially relevant specimen that is known to exist is in Linnaeus’s herbarium at LINN. The specimen No. 236.1 bears the name ‘*citrifolia*’ and the relevant *Species Plantarum* number “2” in Linnaeus’s hand and is therefore considered part of the original material for the name.

Dwyer (in Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 67: 288. 1980) designated Herb. Linnaeus No. 236.1 (LINN) as lectotype of the name *M. citrifolia*. Unfortunately, the specimen represents what is today understood as the continental Asian *Morinda* species, *M. coreia* Buch.-Ham., and is in conflict with the current usage of the name *M. citrifolia*. Ridsdale (Fl. Ceylon 12: 322. 1998) selected the illustration in H.A. van Rheede’s *Hortus Indicus Malabaricus* (Hort. Malab. 1: 97, Fig. 52. 1678) as lectotype of *M. citrifolia*. However, his lectotypification is not effective, as it cannot displace that made earlier by Dwyer (1980).

Morinda citrifolia is an economically important species that is marketed globally as noni or Indian mulberry and used in traditional medicine across much of the tropics. It is the only *Morinda* species with a pantropical distribution (Razafimandimbison & al. in J. Biogeogr. 37: 520–529. 2010) and is treated in published Floras of *Rubiaceae* for many tropical countries (Smith & Darwin in Smith, Fl. Vit. Nova 4: 143–362. 1988; Verdcourt in Bosser & al., Fl. Mascar. 108: 1–135. 1989; Burger & Taylor in Fieldiana Bot. 33: 1–333. 1993; Friedmann, Fl. Seych.: 571–615. 1994; Taylor & al. in Berry & al., Fl. Venez. Guayana 8: 497–848. 2004).

As the specimen LINN No. 236.1 is original material and is not in serious conflict with the protologue, Dwyer’s lectotypification cannot be superseded under Art 9.17b (ICBN, McNeill & al. in Regnum Veg. 146. 2006). Therefore, the current proposal is necessary to maintain established usage of *M. citrifolia*. If the proposal is declined, the name *M. citrifolia* would have to apply to the species presently known as *M. coreia* and the species presently known as *M. citrifolia*, a frequent component of coastal forests in the major parts of the tropics, would have to be called *M. nodosa* Buch.-Ham., causing tremendous confusion. This would be nomenclaturally disruptive for a *Rubiaceae* species firmly rooted in the *Rubiaceae* literature for over two centuries. The changed usage of *M. citrifolia* would be especially problematic due to the wide cultivation and commercial use of noni. For the purpose of nomenclatural stability and to allow the continued use of the well-established epithet *citrifolia* we propose that the name *M. citrifolia* be conserved with a conserved type (ICBN Art. 14.9).

We select *Tirvengadam 624* (K, K000265592) from Sri Lanka as the conserved type of the name *M. citrifolia*, as it is undoubtedly referable to the species to which the name is currently applied. Plus, it shows flowers and immature fruits and that there are duplicates of it currently kept at L and PDA according to Ridsdale (Fl. Ceylon 12: 323. 1998).

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