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Typification and a new synonym of *Beilschmiedia wightii* (Lauraceae)

Tapas Chakrabarty[1]*, Anand Kumar [2] & Partha Pratim Ghoshal[2]

[1]4, Botanical Garden Lane, Howrah – 711 103, West Bengal, India.

[2]Central National Herbarium, Botanical Survey of India, Botanic Garden, Howrah – 711 103, West Bengal, India.

*Email: tchakrab@gmail.com

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Abstract

Beilschmiedia zeylanica (Thwaites) Trimen is combined with *B. wightii* (Nees) Benth. ex Hook.f. A lectotype is designated for *Dehaasia wightii* Nees, the basionym of *B. wightii.* The present research was carried out during the course of revision of the family Lauraceae under the Flora of India Project, currently under preparation in Botanical Survey of India.

Keywords

Lauraceae, *Beilschmiedia*, taxonomy, typification, extended distribution, India, Sri Lanka

Introduction

Beilschmiedia Nees is a pantropical genus represented by about 200–300 species (1). Kostermans (2) treated one species in Sri Lanka while Gangopadhyay *et al.* (3) listed 13 species in India. *Dehassia wightii* Nees, the basionym of *Beilschmiedia wightii* (Nees) Benth. ex Hook.f. was originally described from Courtallam in Tamil Nadu, India based on two collections of Robert Wight, cited in the protologue (4) as: "*Wight Suppl. n.* 742, 750. In Courtallum legit cl. Wight." According to Dr. H.N. Noltie (pers. comm., 2023) when Wight returned to India in 1834 he continued to send batches of specimens to George Walker Arnott, and these were given 'year numbers'. Perhaps Nees called them 'Supplementary numbers'. They should be cited as Wight [1835.]742 and [1835.]750. Of these, in spite of best efforts, only one specimen could be culled out at E which matches well with the protologue. Hence this specimen (E00393172) is designated here as the lectotype of the name. The species is so far known to be endemic to peninsular India (3).

While describing *Apollonias zeylanica*, the basionym of *Beilschmiedia zeylanica* (Thwaites) Trimen, based on collections "CP 2485" from Central Province, Sri Lanka, Thwaites (5) mentioned that the species is very closely allied to *Dehaasia wightii.* Hooker (6) treated the species as *Beilschmiedia oppositifolia* (Meisn.) Benth. ex Hook.f., based on *Dehaasia oppositifolia* Meisn., a superfluous name of *A. zeylanica.* In addition, he (6) treated *B. wightii* as a distinct species and pointed out the close similarities between them but hesitated in uniting them due to non availability of authentic material. Kotermans (2) treated the Ceylonese element as a distinct species, endemic to Sri Lanka. However, he determined two sheets of syntypes of *A. zeylanica* at Kew (K000768643, K000768645) as *B. wightii* in 1967 indicating that he was also confused about the true identity. The present studies on the available material in the relevant Indian herbaria as well as digital images of the specimens available at various herbaria (as listed below) showed that *B. zeylanica* can be distinguished from *B. wightii* only by the fruits which tend to be slightly narrower than the latter (Table 1). In the absence of any further distinguishing feature, these two are combined here under the name *B. wightii* which takes priority. The species is

Table 1. Comparison between *Beilschmiedia wightii* and *B. zeylanica.*

Character	*B. wightii*	*B. zeylanica*
Indumentum	Entirely glabrous	Entirely glabrous
Phyllotaxy	Leaves opposite to subopposite	Leaves opposite to subopposite
Terminal leaf buds	Ovoid-lanceolate to linear-lanceolate, 5–15 mm long	Linear, 10–20 mm long
Leaf shape and size	Elliptic to oblong-elliptic or narrowly so or sometimes ovate-elliptic, 7–18 × 2–6.5 cm	Oblong-elliptic or narrowly so to lanceolate-oblong or narrowly ovate-oblong, 8–18 (–30) × 2–6 (–9) cm
Leaf base	Attenuate, cuneate to acute	Attenuate or acute or sometimes obtuse
Leaf apex	Apiculate to acuminate	Apiculate to acuminate or sometimes obtuse to rounded
Leaf texture	Chartaceous to thinly coriaceous	Thinly coriaceous
Leaf lateral nerves	6–12 pairs	6–10 pairs
Inflorescences	1.5–9 cm long	3–12 cm long
Fruits	Oblong, ellipsoid-oblong to ovoid-ellipsoid, 1.8–2.8 × 1.2–1.5 cm	Oblong to cylindric oblong, 1.5–3 × 0.8–1 cm
Fruiting pedicels	7–20 mm long, ca 4 mm thick towards apex (slightly thickened).	5–12 mm long, 3–3.5 mm thick towards apex (slightly thickened).

characterized by complete glabrescence, opposite to subopposite thinly coriaceous leaves with usually prominent minor venation on both surfaces, inflorescences not enclosed by bracts when immature and the oblong, ellipsoid-oblong to cylindric-oblong fruits, subtended by a stout pedicel. It is well illustrated in literature (2, 7-8). The range of distribution of the species is thus extended to Sri Lanka.

Materials and Methods

The present investigation is based on the study of herbarium specimens (and their digital images) and literature (1-8). The following herbaria were consulted: BSI, BM, CAL, E, G, K, MEL, MH, P and RHT. The descriptions were prepared based on dried materials using hand lens (20 X), except for the flowers, which were expanded by soaking in water for dissection and then measured under an Olympus SZ-61 stereomicroscope. The comparative table was prepared using the descriptions prepared during the course of the present research.

Taxonomy

Beilschmiedia wightii (Nees) Benth. ex Hook.f., Fl. Brit. India 5: 124. 1886.

Dehassia wightii Nees, Syst. Laur. 676. 1836 (as *Hassia*); Wight, Icon. Pl. Ind. Orient. 5(2): 12, t. 1831. 1852.

Lectotype (designated here): INDIA. Tamil Nadu, Tirunelveli dist., Courtallam, September 1835, *Wight* [1835.]742 (E00393172, digital image!).

Apollonias zeylanica Thwaites, Enum. Pl. Zeyl. 253. 1861, **syn. nov.**

Beilschmiedia zeylanica (Thwaites) Trimen, Handb. Fl. Ceylon 3: 440. 1895.

Dehaasia oppositifolia Meisn. in DC., Prodr. 15(1): 61. 1864 (as *Hassia*), *nom. illegit. superfl. Beilschmiedia oppositifolia* (Meisn.) Benth. ex Hook.f., Fl. Brit. India 5: 124. 1886.

Lectotype (designated by Kostermans [2], p. 110): SRI LANKA. Central Province, *no collector* in CP 2485 (PDA, *n.v.*). Additional syntypes: SRI LANKA. Central Province, *no collector* in CP 2485 (BM000950889, digital image!, CAL0000033421!, CAL0000033422!, CAL0000033423!, CAL0000230948!, K000768641, digital image!). SRI LANKA. Central Province, *Thwaites* in CP 2485 (G00390584 – 2 sheets, G00390585, G00693723 – 2 sheets, K000768645, MEL2386517, P02142770, digital images!).

Specimens examined: INDIA. Karnataka, Shimoga dist., Kodachadri, 7 April 1979, *C.J. Saldanha, K.R.Keshava Murthy & S.R.Ramesh* KFP 6861 (CAL). Uttara Kannada dist., Yellambi village, 1968, *V.Puri* 1048 (BSI). Tamil Nadu, Coimbatore dist., Valparai, 28 July 1978, *M.Chandrabose* 57706 (CAL, MH). Tirunelveli dist., Courtallam, September 1835, *no collector [Wight]* 42 (K000768646). Without locality and date, *Wight* Kew Distrib. No. 2526 (K000768647); *ibid.*, *Wight s.n.* (K000768648). Dindigul dist.: Kodaikanal, Dolphin shola, 31 October 1985, *K.M.Matthew & N.Rajendran* 42485 (RHT); Tiger shola, 3 March 1986, *K.M.Matthew & N.Rajendran* 44451 (RHT); Berijem, 5 November 1987, *K.M.Matthew & K.T.Mathew* 51143 (RHT); Mathikettan shola, 16 April 1988, *K.M.Matthew* 52712 (RHT). SRI LANKA. Rasagalle above Balangoda, 15 May 1969, *Kostermans* 23561 (L.1790928). *ibid.*, 18 May 1969, *Kostermans* 23562 (L.1790930). Road Laxapana Maskeliya, Above double cutting, 11 May 1971, *Kostermans* 24060 (L.1790902), Sabarangamuwa Province, Ratnapura dist., Kuttapitiya forest, 3 May 1976, *S.Waas* 1581 (E01067980); *ibid.*, Kurulugala, 25 June 1976, *S.Waas* 1737 (E01067981). Kegalle dist, Koswatte forest, 21 June 1975, *S.Waas* 1572 (E01067982).

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Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interest.

Authors' contributions

All authors have equally contributed in the planning of the research and preparation of manuscript.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest: The authors declared that they have no conflict of interest.

Ethical issues: None.

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