

Announcing a test and trial phase for the registration of new plant names (1998-1999)

by L. BORGEN, W. GREUTER, D. L. HAWKSWORTH, D. H. NICOLSON & B. ZIMMER,
Officers of the International Association for Plant Taxonomy (IAPT)

Introduction

Subject to ratification by the XVI International Botanical Congress (St Louis, 1999) of a rule already included in the International code of botanical nomenclature (Art. 32.1-2 of the Tokyo Code), new names of plants and fungi will have to be registered in order to be validly published after the 1st of January 2000. To demonstrate feasibility of a registration system, the International Association for Plant Taxonomy (IAPT) undertakes a trial of registration, on a non-mandatory basis, for a two-years period starting 1 January 1998. The co-ordinating centre will be the secretariat of IAPT, currently at the Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin-Dahlem, Germany. Co-ordination with current indexing centres for major groups of plants is being sought, in view of their possible active involvement at the implementation stage. The International Mycological Institute in Egham, U.K., has already agreed to act as associate registration centre for the whole of fungi, including fossil fungi.

Registration procedure

The co-ordinating registration centre (IAPT Secretariat), and any associated centre operating under its auspices, will register and make available all names of new taxa, all substitute names, new combinations or rank transfers that are brought to their attention in one of the following ways:

- by being published in an accredited journal or serial;
- by being submitted for registration (normally by the author or one of the authors), either directly or through a national registration office; or
- as a result of scanning of other published information by the registration centres' own staff (for the non-mandatory trial phase only).

Registration by way of publication in accredited journals or serials

For a journal or serial to be accredited, its publishers must commit themselves, by a signed agreement with the IAPT, to

- point out any nomenclatural novelties in each individual issue of their journal or serial, either by including a separate index of novelties or in another suitable, previously agreed way;
- submit each individual issue, as soon as published and by the most rapid way, to a pre-defined registration office or centre.

Accredited journals and serials will be entitled, and even encouraged, to mention that accreditation on the cover or title page, or in the imprint.

A permanently updated list of accredited journals and serials is being placed on the World Wide Web. This list will be published annually in the journal *Taxon*.

Registration by way of submission to registration offices

Authors of botanical nomenclatural novelties that do not appear in an accredited journal or serial (but e.g. in a monograph, pamphlet, or non-accredited periodical publication) are strongly encouraged to submit their names for registration – and will be required to do so once registration becomes mandatory – in the following way:

- all names to be registered are to be listed on an appropriate registration form, using a separate form for each separate publication;
- the form (in triplicate) must be submitted together with two copies of the publication itself, either to a national registration office (see below) or, optionally, directly to the appropriate registration centre. Reprints of articles from books or non-accredited periodicals are acceptable, provided their source is stated accurately and in full;
- one dated copy of each form will be sent back to the submitting author in acknowledgement of effected registration.

Registration forms may be obtained free of charge (a) by addressing a request to any registration office or centre, by letter, fax or e-mail, or (b), preferably, by printing and copying the form as available on the World Wide Web.

Registration offices are presently being established in as many different countries as possible. They will serve (a) as mailboxes and forwarding agencies for registration submissions and (b) as national repositories for printed matter in which new names published locally appear.

A permanently updated address list of all functioning national registration offices is being placed on the World Wide Web. This list will be also be published annually in the journal *Taxon*.

Registration date

The date of registration, as here defined, will be the date of receipt of the registration submission at any national registration office or appropriate registration centre. For accredited journals or serials (and, for the duration of the trial phase, for publications scanned at the registration centres), it will be the date of receipt of the publication at the location of the registration centre (or national office, if so agreed).

For the duration of the trial phase, i.e. as long as registration is non-mandatory, the date of a name will, just as before, be the date of effective publication of the printed matter in which it is validated, irrespective of the date of registration. Nevertheless, the registration date will be recorded, for the following reasons:

- to make clear that the name was published on or before that date, in cases when the date of effective publication is not specified in the printed matter;
- to assess the time difference between the (effective or stated) date of the printed matter and that of registration, since it is envisaged that the date of registration be accepted as the date of names published on or after 1 January 2000.

It is therefore in the interest of every author to submit nomenclatural novelties for registration without any delay, and by the most rapid means available.

Access to registration data

Information on registered names will be made publicly available as soon as feasible,

- (a) by placing it on the World Wide Web without delay in a searchable database,
- (b) by publishing non-cumulative lists biannually, and
- (c) hopefully, by issuing cumulative updates on a CD-ROM-type, fully searchable data medium at similar intervals.

A call to everyone: help testing the system so as to make it work

To make the test effective and significant, it is important that everyone publishing nomenclatural novelties on or after 1 January 1998 should participate by registering all new names and combinations on a voluntary basis. Please help (a) by doing so yourself and (b) by spreading the message to others!

Do not be put off if shortcomings or errors occur in the initial months. Remember, this is a test phase. Let us know of any bug or crinkle in the system, and we will iron it out. What matters is that everything operates smoothly by the end of 1999, and that by the next Congress all have satisfied themselves that it will.

We believe that registration of new names, once implemented in a functional way, will be a great benefit for all concerned with but little inconvenience for cost – and so did the Nomenclature Section at Yokohama in 1993. Nomenclature must be fit for a good start into the next millennium. Let us work together to make it happen.