

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES  
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Twenty-sixth meeting of the Plants Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 5 – 9 June 2023

Appendices of the Convention

Nomenclature matters

Flora

NOMENCLATURE FOR EBONIES (*DIOSPYROS* SPP.)  
(POPULATIONS OF MADAGASCAR)

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with the specialist on botanical nomenclature of the Plants Committee (Ms. Ronell R. Klopper).
2. Resolution Conf. 12.11 (Rev. CoP19) on *Standard nomenclature* lists the following taxonomic reference for *Diospyros* spp. (populations of Madagascar, large tree species):

*Lowry et al.* 2022. Large tree species of *Diospyros* from Madagascar. *Catalogue of Plants of Madagascar*.

[http://legacy.tropicos.org/ProjectWebPortal.aspx?pagename=Diospyros\\_LT&projectid=17](http://legacy.tropicos.org/ProjectWebPortal.aspx?pagename=Diospyros_LT&projectid=17).

Accessible at:

[https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/prog/timber/Ebenaceae\\_Diospyros\\_spp\\_populations\\_of\\_Madagascar\\_052022.pdf](https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/prog/timber/Ebenaceae_Diospyros_spp_populations_of_Madagascar_052022.pdf)

3. At its 19th meeting (CoP19; Panama City, 2022), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decision 19.281 and 19.282 on *Nomenclature for ebonies* (*Diospyros* spp.) (*populations of Madagascar*) as follows:

**Directed to the Secretariat, in close cooperation with the nomenclature specialist of the Plants Committee**

**19.281** *The Secretariat shall, in close cooperation with the nomenclature specialist of the Plants Committee:*

- a) *subject to the availability of external resources, commission the drafting of an updated standard nomenclature reference of *Diospyros* spp. (populations of Madagascar), taking into consideration relevant elements of paragraph 8 of the Addendum to document PC25 Doc. 31; and*
- b) *report on progress or results of this work to the Plants Committee.*

**Directed to the Plants Committee**

**19.282** *The Plants Committee shall:*

- a) *consider progress and results reported by the Secretariat as per Decision 19.281; and*

b) *make recommendations to the Conference of the Parties, as appropriate.*

#### Progress in the implementation of Decision 19.281

4. The Secretariat estimated the cost of the development of an updated standard nomenclature reference of *Diospyros* spp. called for in paragraph a) of Decision 19.281 at USD 80,000 (see also [Notification No. 2023/024](#)). At the time of writing, the Secretariat is in the process of reviewing this estimate to ensure the timely and effective implementation of Decision 19.281 and will provide an update on this at the present meeting.
5. In parallel, and in consultation with the specialist on botanical nomenclature, the Secretariat has developed draft terms of reference for the development of an updated standard nomenclature reference of *Diospyros* spp. (populations of Madagascar), as contained in Annex 1 to the present document.
6. Noting that paragraph a) of Decision 19.281 calls for consideration of relevant elements of paragraph 8 of the Addendum to document PC25 Doc. 31, these have been included as an Annex 2 to the present document for ease of reference at the present meeting.
7. In consultation with the specialist on botanical nomenclature, the Secretariat also highlights the following aspects relevant to drafting an updated nomenclature reference of *Diospyros* spp. (populations of Madagascar):
  - a) The taxonomic reference for *Diospyros* spp. (populations of Madagascar, large tree species) is a time-stamped download of the online *Catalogue of the Plants of Madagascar*, dated 16 May 2022.
  - b) It is estimated that there are around 250 species of *Diospyros* in Madagascar. However, the nomenclature reference in Resolution Conf. 12.11 (Rev. CoP19) only contains the names of 88 large tree species (i.e., those species that grows to a height of 20 m or more, or those with a diameter at breast height of 20 cm or more) that are known or suspected to produce wood of commercial value.
  - c) Taxonomic work on *Diospyros* spp. in Madagascar is ongoing and several new species have been described in the recent past. More changes to the taxonomy and nomenclature of the Malagasy ebones are expected.
  - d) Any new reference, where new species are added, would also need to take into consideration that if new tree species are recognized as such, any adoption of the new reference would also need to be accompanied by an amendment proposal in accordance with paragraph 2 f) of Resolution Conf. 12.11 (Rev. CoP19).
  - e) The updated reference could take the shape of a time-stamped download from a database, or that of a formal publication, as for example in the case of the CITES *Dalbergia* Checklist<sup>1</sup>.
  - f) The format in which the updated reference is produced should be carefully considered in the light of the changing taxonomy and nomenclature as a result of ongoing research on these plants. A formal publication would likely enable the compilation of more detailed information for each species in a more user-friendly format (similar to the CITES *Dalbergia* Checklist) than could be possible in a time-stamped download from a database. On the other hand, although a checklist in the form of a formal publication would likely be preferred, it might be easier and more cost effective to produce updated time-stamped downloads from *Catalogue of the Plants of Madagascar*, at least until the taxonomy of the group stabilizes.
  - g) Potential partners to collaborate on the production of an updated standard reference for *Diospyros* spp. (populations of Madagascar) include the Missouri Botanical Garden (St. Louis, United States of America) and the National Museum of Natural History (Paris, France), and their collaborators in Madagascar. These institutions have an existing collaborative project doing research on Malagasy *Diospyros* spp. The online *Catalogue of the Plants of Madagascar* is managed by Missouri as part of their [TROPICOS](#) platform. This group is therefore well-suited to produce an updated standard nomenclature reference of *Diospyros* spp. (populations of Madagascar).

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: <https://www.kew.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/CITES%20Dalbergia%20Checklist%202022%20%28EN%29%20%28PDF%29.pdf>

8. The above considerations have been accounted for in the draft terms of reference contained in Annex 1 to the present document.

Recommendations

9. The Plants Committee is invited to:
  - a) consider progress in the implementation of Decision 19.281; and
  - b) provide input to the draft terms of reference contained in Annex 1 to the present document.

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AN UPDATED STANDARD NOMENCLATURE REFERENCE  
OF *DIOSPYROS* SPP. (POPULATIONS OF MADAGASCAR)

**Activities**

- a) **Activity 1** – Desk study and consultation with experts: in consultation and collaboration with *Diospyros* spp. taxonomic experts:
- i) undertake a literature review using as a baseline document PC26 Doc. 43.4 and its Annexes, with particular focus on the references and taxonomic databases and sources cited in them;
  - ii) compare the names in the sources considered in paragraph *supra*, and consider any additional input made available by *Diospyros* spp. range States;
  - iii) identify any discrepancies and the range States to which these apply; and
  - iv) provide recommendations on the best format for an updated standard nomenclature reference of the taxa, whether it be a formal publication, or a time-stamped download of an online database.
- b) **Activity 2** – Develop and submit to the Secretariat for further consideration of the Plants Committee a draft of the updated standard nomenclature reference for *Diospyros* spp. containing the following:
- i) Section 1: Introduction
    - Background
    - Data and information used
    - Methodology for the revision process
    - How to use the CITES Checklist
    - Bibliography
    - Key to symbols and country codes
  - ii) Section 2: Present full and alphabetically ordered lists of
    - scientific binomial names in current usage, and accepted binomials to which they are synonyms
    - accepted scientific binomials, their respective synonyms, and range States in which they occur
    - accepted scientific binomials of species occurring in each *Diospyros* spp. range State
  - iii) Section 3: For each species in alphabetical order, present the following information where available:
    - Valid taxon name
    - Synonym(s)
    - Common name(s) in English, French, and Spanish [when available]
    - Life form [e.g. trees (T), shrubs (S)]
    - Maximum height
    - Distribution
    - Vegetation / habitat types (whenever available)
    - Listing in CITES Appendices (annotations included)
    - Conservation status (published or preliminary IUCN Red List assessments, as appropriate)
    - Known to trade or likelihood to be in trade
    - Known uses
    - Known to occur in plantations or artificial propagation
    - Identification resources and illustrations (whenever available)
    - Known reference samples (when applicable)
- c) **Activity 3** –Based on the above and should it be deemed pertinent, design and implement the requirements and specifications for the updated nomenclature reference to be adapted into an online database format.

- d) **Activity 4** – Develop an updated standard nomenclature reference of *Diospyros spp.* (populations of Madagascar) taking into account feedback provided by the Plants Committee.

PARAGRAPH 8 OF THE ADDENDUM TO DOCUMENT PC25 DOC. 31

8. *Diospyros* spp. and *Dalbergia* spp. (populations of Madagascar) (PC25 Doc. 31 paragraph 10 c)

At CoP17, the Conference of the Parties adopted a standard reference for *Diospyros* populations of Madagascar and tasked the Plants Committee to continue supporting the preparation and updating of these adopted checklists, which were seen as ‘works in progress’. Although it was decided that focus should first fall on *Dalbergia*, there is a need to also look at *Diospyros*, as well as provide feedback on that checklist and how an update of it will be endeavoured.

Only one species listed on Appendix II that is no longer recognised in other sources could be found, namely *Diospyros laevis*, which is synonymised under *D. squamosa* (Appendix II). However, according to China, this is still an accepted name. Therefore, nomenclature-related aspects for this genus should perhaps be revisited in future. However, it was reiterated that this remains a high priority in keeping with the recommendation emanating from PC24 (2018) to prepare annotated checklists prioritizing Malagasy species for adoption by a meeting of the Conference of the Parties (preferably CoP19).

A way forward was suggested based on previous decisions and discussions of the Plants Committee. It is estimated that approximately 20 additional *Diospyros* species have been added to the CITES database since the preliminary taxon list was adopted at CoP17. Prior to adopting the *Diospyros* checklist at CoP17, consultation with species experts indicated that the then “Catalogue of the Vascular Plants of Madagascar” (<http://www.tropicos.org/project/mada> — now “Vascular Plant of Madagascar”) was (at least at that time) considered to be the most appropriate source upon which to base the interim checklists. As such, it is suggested that, as a stopgap measure, we consider using an updated download from this database to replace the 2016 download that is currently used [Catalogue of the Vascular Plants of Madagascar (CVPM) 2016. The genus *Diospyros* in Madagascar: a preliminary checklist for CITES Parties. Compiled by Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis, U.S.A. & Antananarivo, Madagascar.]. Additionally, it is suggested to also consult World Flora Online (<http://www.worldfloraonline.org>), and the relevant literature adopted therein. It is further suggested that all *Diospyros* species listed on Appendix II be rechecked.