Merger of the Monotypic Genus *Farringtonia* with *Siphanthera* (Melastomataceae)

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ABSTRACT. Phylogenetic studies based on morphological data show that *Farringtonia*, a monotypic genus originally placed in the Microlicieae but recently assigned to the Melastomeae, forms part of a small clade nested within the genus *Siphanthera*. Because these genera form a monophyletic group, *Farringtonia* and *Siphanthera* are merged and the new combination, *Siphanthera fasciculata*, is proposed.

The genus *Farringtonia* was established by Gleason (1952) for a single Venezuelan collection made by Julian A. Steyermark at the southeastern base of Cerro Duida in the state of Amazonas. In the protologue, Gleason suggested a close relationship between *Farringtonia* and *Siphanthera* Pohl based on such shared characters as 4-merous flowers and rostrate anthers. The distinctive features that, in Gleason's view, set *Farringtonia* apart from other melastome genera and species known to him at the time included its stoutly subulate anthers, large anther appendages, malpighiaceous cauline hairs, and fascicled *Empetrum*-like leaves.

In the course of preparing a monograph of *Siphanthera* we have conducted a comprehensive character analysis of *Siphanthera*, *Farringtonia*, and numerous possible sister genera in the Microlicieae and Melastomeae, the two tribes to which *Siphanthera* has been assigned (Gleason, 1952; Renner, 1993). Our phylogenetic studies of these genera using vegetative and reproductive characters provide consistent and unequivocal evidence that *Farringtonia* and *Siphanthera* form a monophyletic group, because *F. fasciculata* Gleason and *S. cordifolia* (Bentham) Gleason are sister taxa nested in a small clade within *Siphanthera*. Among the characters Gleason used to emphasize the generic distinctiveness of *Farringtonia*, only the apomorphic *Empetrum*-like leaves appear to be noteworthy in circumscribing the species, but none of these or any other characters have diagnostic value in the continued recognition of a monotypic genus. The malpighiaceous cauline hairs of *F. fasciculata* are very similar to those found in another, as yet undescribed species of *Siphanthera* from Amazonian Brazil. Thus, continued recognition of *Farringtonia*, a monotypic genus nested within a clade of the larger, diverse *Siphanthera* is inconsistent with our attempt to provide a phylogenetic classification.

The single species of *Farringtonia* is here transferred to *Siphanthera*, a monophyletic South American genus defined by a 4-merous flower, 2-locular ovary, and lacrimiform to vaguely reniform, areolate seeds. A description, distributional data, and habitat notes are included in our treatment of *Siphanthera* for the *Flora of the Venezuelan Guayana* and will be amplified in our forthcoming monograph (Almeda & Robinson, in prep.).

Siphanthera fasciculata (Gleason) Almeda & O. Robinson, comb. nov. Basionym: *Farringtonia fasciculata* Gleason, Fieldiana, Bot. 28: 426. 1952. TYPE: Venezuela. Amazonas: between Esmeralda Savanna and the southeastern base of Cerro Duida, 22 Aug. 1944, *Steyermark 57837* (holotype, F; isotypes, GH, NY, US).

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Literature Cited

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