

A new combination in *Rennellia* (Rubiaceae)

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ABSTRACT

Rennellia wallichii is proposed as a new combination to take the place of *R. speciosa* as the correct name of a Rubiaceae species from Myanmar, Thailand and Malaysia. A lectotype is designated for *Morinda wallichii*.

KEYWORDS: *Gynochthodes*, Kurz, lectotype, *Morinda*, South-East Asia.

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INTRODUCTION

Kurz (1872) published *Morinda wallichii* as the name of a species from Tenasserim, in what is now southern Myanmar. The protologue included a short description but no specific citation of specimens. Hooker (1880–1881) treated the species as doubtful as he only had Kurz's description available to him. Razafimandimbison & Bremer (2011) transferred the species to the genus *Gynochthodes* Blume, presumably based on Kurz's reference to a terminal inflorescence. I happened to come across an overlooked and much earlier validation of the name *Gynochthodes wallichii* (Kurz, 1875a), which made *G. wallichii* (Kurz) Razafim. & B. Bremer an illegitimate later homonym. In order to investigate this nomenclatural issue further, I requested information on possible type material of *Morinda wallichii* from the Central National Herbarium (CAL), Botanical Survey of India. I received photographs of the three herbarium sheets held under Kurz's name, all apparently annotated by Kurz. One had no indication of collector or locality, the second was *Parish 316* (Fig. 1), without locality, and the third one (Fig. 2) had a Calcutta label stating that it was *Wall. Cat. No. 8438B*, '*Psychotria morindaeflora* Wall.', *nom. nud.*, from Penang. The specimen is certainly not *P. morindaeflora* Wall. ex Hook.f., but it

may explain Kurz's choice of epithet for *M. wallichii*. Very probably there was an error in matching label with herbarium material for this specimen. It seems highly likely that this is actually duplicate material of *Wallich Cat. No. [EIC] 8436*, what Wallich called *Morinda speciosa*, a collection by Wallich himself from Myanmar. Certainly the pale grey striate stem and narrowly oblong-elliptic leaves with pale undersides visible on the image are a good match for the 8436 specimens available. These belong to what is currently called *Rennellia speciosa* (Kurz) Hook.f., a species from southern Myanmar, Peninsular Thailand and Peninsular Malaysia (Johansson, 1989). Kurz validated *M. speciosa*, the basionym of *R. speciosa*, in 1875, but *M. wallichii* was first published in 1872. *Morinda wallichii* has priority over *M. speciosa*, so a new combination in *Rennellia* for *M. wallichii* is proposed here to become the correct name for this species. The best of the three sheets, the Parish collection, is selected here as lectotype.

Kurz (1875b, 1877) maintained *Morinda wallichii* and *M. speciosa* as separate species. His *M. wallichii* specimens only have flowers in bud, but it is surprising that he never noted the strong overall similarity of the two.

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Figure 1. Image of Parish 316, the lectotype of *Morinda wallichii* Kurz. © The Director, Botanical Survey of India, Kolkata.



Figure 2. Image of Wallich s.n. [EIC 8438B], a syntype of *Morinda wallichii* Kurz. The collection number is incorrect and should be 8436. © The Director, Botanical Survey of India, Kolkata.

TAXONOMIC TREATMENT

Rennellia wallichii (Kurz) I.M. Turner, **comb. nov.**— *Morinda wallichii* Kurz, J. Asiat. Soc. Bengal, Pt. 2, Nat. Hist. 41: 313. 1872.— *Gynochthodes wallichii* (Kurz) Razafim. & B. Bremer, Adansonia 33: 297. 2011, *nom. illeg.*, non *G. wallichii* Kurz (1875). Type: s.loc., s.dat., *Parish 316* (lectotype CAL [CAL000003399] image seen, designated here).

— *Morinda speciosa* Kurz, Prelim. Rep. Forest Pegu App. B. 60. 1875, in clavi.— *Rennellia speciosa* (Kurz) Hook.f., Fl. Brit. India 3(7): 158. 1880. Type: [Myanmar], Chapedong Hill, 23 Feb. 1827, *Wallich 1693 [EIC 8436]* (lectotype **K-W** [K001125510!], designated by Johansson [1989]; isolectotypes **K** [K000763843!, K000763844!], **LE** [LE00017562] image seen).

A citation of *Gynochthodes coriacea* Blume is added here, to confirm the new synonym.

Gynochthodes coriacea Blume, Bijdr. Fl. Ned. Ind. 16: 993. 1826–1827. Type: Indonesia, Java, Kuripan, s.dat., *Blume s.n.* (lectotype **L** [L0057744] image seen, designated by Suratman [2018]).

— *Gynochthodes wallichii* Kurz, J. Bot. 13: 327. 1875, *syn. nov.* Type: Singapore, prope litora, 1822, *Wallich s.n. [EIC 6249]* (lectotype **K-W** [K001123422!], designated here).

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