

Magnolia lawiana Sima & H. Yu is a superfluous renaming of *M. odoratissima* Y. W. Law & R. Z. Zhou (*Magnoliaceae*)

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The name *Magnolia odoratissima* Y. W. Law & R. Z. Zhou is reinstated as legitimate, because the supposed earlier homonym *M. odoratissima* Reinw. ex Blume has never been validly published. Therefore, later publication of the new name *M. lawiana* Sima & H. Yu to replace *Magnolia odoratissima* Y. W. Law & R. Z. Zhou is nomenclaturally superfluous.

KEYWORDS: *Magnolia odoratissima* Y. W. Law & R. Z. Zhou, *M. lawiana* Sima & H. Yu, nomenclature.

Magnolia odoratissima Y. W. Law & R. Z. Zhou, which Prof. Law Yu-wu and his assistant Mr. Zhou Renzhang published in 1986 (Law & Zhou, 1986), was based on specimens from Yunnan (Type: Zhou 54, IBSC!). The name has been included in Flora Reipublicae Popularis Sinicae Tomus 30(1) by Law (1996) and widely recognized as a species of high horticultural value. It has been listed in the National Protected Plant Species Class 2 in the China Plant Red Data Book (National Environment Protection Bureau & Institute of Botany, 1992) and National Protected Pivotal Wide Plant Species (First Batch) (proclaimed jointly by the National Agricultural Ministry and the National Forestry Bureau, 1999). In contrast, both Chen & Nooteboom (1993) and Frodin & Govaerts (1996) treated it as a synonym of *M. champinii* Benth.

The legitimacy of the name, however, has been a subject of recent controversy, through the mistaken belief that the same name had been previously adopted by Blume (Blume, 1829) for another taxon from Java, *Magnolia odoratissima* Reinw. ex Blume. The latter has been cited in the synonymy of *Talauma candollei* Blume, and is now listed in the synonymy of *M. candollei* (Blume) H. Keng (Nooteboom, 1988). Based on this misconception of its illegitimacy, Sima & Yu (2003) recently proposed a new name, *M. lawiana*, to replace *M. odoratissima* Y. W. Law & R. Z. Zhou in a little-known Chinese journal.

The deemed earlier homonym of *M. odoratissima* Y. W. Law & R. Z. Zhou is not, however, validly published. In its supposed protologue, Blume (1829: p. 32) clearly indicated “*M. odoratissima* Reinw.” as an unpublished name from Reinwardt’s specimen, in the synonymy of his own *Talauma candollei* Blume (‘*candollii*’). So “*M. odoratissima* Reinw. ex Blume” was never published as a name of a species. It has only been published explicit-

ly as a synonym from the beginning.

According to the *International Code of Botanical Nomenclature* (Greuter & al., 2000), a name of a taxon has no status unless it is validly published (Article 12), and a name is not validly published when it is not accepted by the author in the original publication or when it is merely cited as a synonym (Article 34). It is thus apparent that the supposed “*M. odoratissima* Reinw. ex Blume” has never been validly published and has no priority over the name *M. odoratissima* Y. W. Law & R. Z. Zhou, which is a validly published name. The publication of the new name *M. lawiana* Sima & H. Yu, is redundant. According to the *International Code of Botanical Nomenclature* Article 52, the name is illegitimate because it was nomenclaturally superfluous when published, and is to be rejected.

The present account is urgent and necessary because it will help avoid much inconvenience to the sects of society that use *Magnolia odoratissima* Y. W. Law & R. Z. Zhou as an ornamental tree, prevent unnecessary harm to the efforts both at the national and local levels to protect and conserve this species by making its nomenclature unstable, and clarify an existing nomenclatural controversy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. John H. Wiersema kindly brought to my notice the invalid status of “*Magnolia odoratissima* Reinw. ex Blume”, and together with Prof. John McNeill, critically read and corrected the manuscript. Financial support was from The National Natural Science Foundation of China (40332021) and The Chinese Academy of Sciences Innovation Project.

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