

Epitypification of *Andrographis alata* (Acanthaceae)

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Abstract

The name *Andrographis alata* (Vahl) Nees, basionym *Justicia alata* Vahl, is epitypified here.

Introduction

Vahl (1804) described *Justicia alata* based on the specimen (*J.G. Koenig s.n.*, C10004732) collected from India [India Orientalis] with the diagnostic characters of “Racemes axillary, leaves are linear to lanceolate and stems somewhat winged” (Vahl 1804, p. 139). Nees (1847, p. 516) transferred this species to *Andrographis* and further stated that the specimen at Vahl herbarium is “imperfect and lack of flowers”. During a study of the systematics of *Andrographis* in India, an image of the type specimen from the Vahl herbarium at Natural History Museum of Denmark (C) was examined. This specimen is represented only by the stem with portion of a leaf, and devoid of flowers, bracts, and fruits (Fig. 1). Since the protologue describes the inflorescence, flowers and arrangement of leaves, this implies that the type specimen was previously more complete or Vahl had access to other specimens collected by Koenig. Attempts to locate other type material were unsuccessful. Therefore, the collection *J.G. Koenig s.n.* (C10004732) is regarded as the holotype of the name *J. alata*. If it is not the holotype because other material was examined by Vahl, then this collection is designated here as the lectotype.

Andrographis alata is morphologically similar to *A. elongata* (Vahl) T. Anderson and these two species may be confused. The latter species also has axillary and terminal racemes and winged stems. *Andrographis alata* can be distinguished from the latter because of its large-sized flower (over 1 cm long), anthers that are glabrous at their base and lanceolate to linear leaves towards top of the glabrous plant. Therefore, the type of this name is demonstrably ambiguous and cannot be used for precise identification and application of the name. Thus, an epitype specimen is selected here for this name to serve as an interpretative type material according to Articles 9.8 and 9.21 and recommendation 9C.1 of ICN (McNeill et al. 2012).

Andrographis alata (Vahl) Nees in A.P. de Candolle & A.L.P.P. de Candolle, *Prodromus Systematis Naturalis Regni Vegetabilis* 11: 516 (1847).

Justicia alata Vahl, *Enumeratio Plantarum* 1: 139 (1804). Type: India Orientalis: *J. G. Koenig s.n.*, without date. (Lecto, here designated, or possibly holo): C10004732 [image!]. – **Fig. 1.**

Epitype (here designated): India: Tamil Nadu: Nilgiris district: Barliyar–Coonoor, 800 m, G. Gnanasekaran 126893, 27 Feb 2013 (MH); isoepi: CAL. – **Fig. 2.**

