

Editorial

Format of descriptions of new taxa of fossil plants (genera, species)

W. Punt

Laboratorium voor Palaeobotanie en Palynologie, Utrecht, The Netherlands

Over the last 20 years the *Review of Palaeobotany and Palynology* has become a leading journal for publishing new names of fossil plant taxa (families, genera, species). This development was encouraged by the members of the editorial board and the Editor-in-Chief. Personally, as chief editor, I had a strong interest in correct nomenclature and application of the rules of the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature (ICBN) from the beginning onwards. These rules stipulate that a number of requirements must be met in order that publication is not only effective, but also valid, e.g. the designating of the holotype and the location where the holotype is housed, as well as the citation of the authorship. In addition, there are some further optional items convenient to include, such as locality, stratigraphic horizon and etymology of the name. The characters in which the new taxon differs from related taxa should be specified in the discussion. Gradually it has become a habit to treat all these particular points, although various authors would maintain a different order and for that reason the sequence of items varies from one author to another.

In the last few years, I have tried to bring some uniformity in this sequence in which all these items would be presented. It now seems timely to make a formal suggestion to introduce a fixed sequence of these points. After consultation of a number of board-members about this subject, a fixed order in which the various elements are given is suggested. This is presented in the following scheme, with brief examples, and provides authors with a convenient internally acceptable uniform format of establishing new nomenclature. It should suit

any international journal, and from now on will be used as standard for manuscripts submitted to the *Review*.

Scheme of headings for description of new genera and species (comb. nov. included)

GENUS author's name(s), *gen. nov.*

NOTE 1: when a genus is raised from subgeneric rank, give original author and year in parentheses, followed by author who raised it. The genus name then must be followed by: *Basionym* (i.e. treat as new combination, see below).

NOTE 2: References to synonyms and/or other references may be inserted here.

Type (typus): name, author's name(s), year.

Diagnosis:

NOTE: For a new genus based on a **single new species**, the Diagnosis may be replaced by a *Combined description* and transferred to a place under the new species name (see below). This is, however, **not** recommended. It is better to make a concise diagnosis of the genus based on the most important characters and include the less important features, like measurements, in the species diagnosis.

Etymology: (or *Derivatio nominis; Derivation of name*).

Discussion: (or *Comparison*, but this is also a separate item under Species. This discussion should also give the "differential characters" in which the new genus differs from other genera).

NOTE: *Etymology* and *Discussion* may be combined with the description scheme of the species.

However, if more than one species is suggested, the above sections should be retained.

Species name author's name, *sp. nov.*

Holotype or **Lectotype** (or **Neotype**): data, figure(s) and where preserved.

NOTE 1: If present, mention *Isotypes*, *Syntypes* and *Paratypes*.

NOTE 2: If present, synonyms and/or other references may be mentioned here.

Repository:

Type locality:

Stratigraphic horizon (or **Type stratum**):

Etymology:

Diagnosis: Includes main characters only and, usually, excludes measurements.

Description: All additional data of secondary importance, like measurements.

NOTE: The sections *Diagnosis* and *Description* may be combined. However, to facilitate the inclusion of new taxa in the same genus, it is recommended to split these sections.

Discussion: The discussion should also give the "differential characters" in which the new taxon differs from other taxa, both in morphological characters as well as in stratigraphic relationships.

Scheme for new combinations (including elevation of subspecies and variety to species rank)

Species name (author's name(s), year; i.e. the name of the author of the original specific epithet) author's name(s), *comb. nov/stat. nov.*

This new combination must be followed by:

Basionym: *Species name* (as originally described), author, year, reference to literature, including page number on which the name was published, and also plate and figure specified.

Synonyms:

Diagnosis (or reference to diagnosis if already available):

Example: Proposed new genus and new species

MELODOMUNCULA Versteegh, *gen. nov.*

Type: *Melodomuncula berlinensis* Versteegh, *sp. nov.*

Diagnosis:

Etymology: Latin, *melis*, honey; *domuncula*, little house, with reference to the shape.

Discussion (Comparison):

Melodomuncula berlinensis Versteegh, *sp. nov.*

Holotype: Cyst No. T20-S1/80-81/109, SEM micrographs 307–310 (Plate VI, 1–3, 7)

Repository: Laboratory of Palaeobotany and Palynology, University of Utrecht, The Netherlands.

Type locality: Piston core T87-2-20G, southern margin of Crete.

Stratigraphic horizon: Upper Pleistocene.

Etymology: From Berlin.

Diagnosis:

Description:

Discussion:

(**Comparison**):

Example: Proposed new combination

Diplodites rodei (Mahabale, 1968) Kalgutkar, Nambudiri et Tidwell, *comb. nov.*

Basionym: *Diplodia rodei* Mahabale, 1968, *Paleobotanist*, 17: 297, plate 1, 1–6, textfigures 1–6; holotype No. MK/65, plate 1, fig. 6.

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