



A new genus and a major temperate bamboo lineage of the Arundinarieae (Poaceae: Bambusoideae) from Sri Lanka based on a multi-locus plastid phylogeny

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Abstract

Kuruna, a new temperate woody bamboo (Poaceae, Bambusoideae, Arundinarieae) genus from Sri Lanka, is recognized based on chloroplast sequence data from five markers (coding: *ndhF* 3' end; non-coding: *rps16-trnQ*, *trnC-rpoB*, *trnD-trnT*, *trnT-trnL*). This genus represents the twelfth major lineage of temperate woody bamboos and is characterized by pachymorph culm bases with short necks, unicaespitose clumps, culm leaf girdles ca. 1 mm wide, usually abaxially hispid culm leaves with non-irritating hairs, persistent foliage leaf sheaths, complete branch sheathing and acute to biapiculate palea apices. Maximum Parsimony, Bayesian Inference and Maximum Likelihood analyses of a combined data set consistently strongly supported the monophyly of this Sri Lankan temperate woody bamboo clade. Although the Kishino-Hasegawa test is unable to reject the alternative hypothesis of monophyly of the Sri Lankan clade plus *Bergbambos tessellata* from South Africa, *Kuruna* and *Bergbambos* are distinguishable by a combination of morphological characters. A few additional cpDNA markers not previously used in phylogenetic analyses of Arundinarieae were tested to evaluate their utility in this taxonomically difficult tribe.

Introduction

Bamboos are important components of forest and tropical high altitude grassland ecosystems worldwide (Soderstrom & Calderón 1979, Judziewicz *et al.* 1999). The bamboos (Poaceae subfamily Bambusoideae) include approximately 1,450 species (Bamboo Phylogeny Group [BPG] 2012) classified into two tribes of woody bamboos (the tropical Bambuseae and the temperate Arundinarieae) and one tribe of herbaceous bamboos (the Olyreae). Significant animal biodiversity is associated with bamboo-dominated ecosystems (Judziewicz *et al.* 1999, Bystrakova *et al.* 2003, Mutschler & Tan 2003 & others cited in BPG 2012) and bamboos play important roles in forest dynamics (e.g., Li & Xue 1997, Judziewicz *et al.* 1999). Despite the ecological and economic importance of bamboos, basic knowledge of the biology and genetics of woody bamboos is still lacking due in part to their unusual life cycle, with the vegetative phase ranging from a few to 120 years (McClure 1966). Furthermore, the generic classification of bamboos is in a fluctuating state, although the supra-generic classification of bamboo has been improved based on recent phylogenetic analyses (BPG 2012).

The indigenous flora of Sri Lanka has about 7,000 species of mosses, ferns and flowering plants (Abeywicrama 1986). Nearly one fourth of the angiosperms of Sri Lanka are endemic and highly concentrated in the humid southwestern quarter of the country, which includes moist low country and the montane zone (Gunatilleke & Gunatilleke 1990). Bamboos occur naturally in all three major climatic zones (wet, dry and intermediate) in Sri Lanka and no native bamboo is found in extremely dry areas (Kariyawasam 1998). Bamboo, in general, is an economically and culturally important plant for Sri Lanka (De Zoysa & Vivekanandan 1994, Gunatilleke *et al.* 1994) and a series of studies have been conducted mainly focusing on bamboo reproductive ecology (Ramanayake & Yakandawala 1995, 1998, Ramanayake & Weerawardene 2003), vegetative propagation (Ramanayake *et al.* 2006) and bamboo growth and development (Ramanayake *et al.* 2001). These studies were carried out before the widespread use of molecular sequence data to establish evolutionary relationships and confirm the generic classification of these species.

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