



Six species of *Psilanthus* transferred to *Coffea* (Coffeae, Rubiaceae)

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Abstract

The placement of *Psilanthus* into the synonymy of *Coffea* necessitates nomenclatural changes. Five new combinations and two new names are provided: *C. bengalensis* var. *bababudanii*, *C. brassii*, *C. malabarica*, *C. neobridsoniae*, *C. neoleroyiana*, *C. sapinii* and *C. semsei*.

Key words: coffee, new combinations, new names

Introduction

Psilanthus Hook.f. (Hooker 1873a, 1873b: 115) is a genus of 18 species, occurring in the Old World Tropics from West Africa to northern Australia (Govaerts *et al.* 2010). The genus is closely associated with *Coffea* L. (Linnaeus 1753: 172), a genus of 103 species (Davis *et al.* 2006), occurring in Tropical Africa, Madagascar, the Comoros and the Mascarenes. *Coffea* and *Psilanthus* are both members of Coffeae and molecular data shows that these genera form a well-supported two-genus clade within the tribe (Davis *et al.* 2007). On the basis of species-level molecular data (Lashermes *et al.* 1997, Cros *et al.* 1998, Maurin *et al.* 2007) it has been posited that the recognition of *Psilanthus* is untenable, an argument that has not been contradicted by morphological evidence (Davis *et al.* 2005, Davis *et al.* 2006, Davis & Rakotonasolo 2008, Maurin *et al.* 2007). The strong relationship between these two genera, founded on molecular and morphological data, is in agreement with close cytological correspondence (Lombello & Pinto-Maglio 2003, 2004). In addition, Couturon *et al.* (1998) have produced a fertile intergeneric hybrid between *Coffea* and *Psilanthus*. Recent molecular studies for *Psilanthus* (Davis *et al.*, unpubl. data), with sampling across the morphological and geographical range of the genus, now clearly demonstrates that the recognition of *Psilanthus* results in the paraphyly of *Coffea*.

Due to the early and repeated association between *Psilanthus* and *Coffea*, most *Psilanthus* species already have valid names in *Coffea*. Only five new combinations and two new names are required for the transfer of all *Psilanthus* species to *Coffea*, even when two species are resurrected from synonymy (see below). In preparation for the printed version of the *World Checklist of Rubiaceae* (Govaerts *et al.*, in prep.), and because *Coffea* is the focus of considerable research effort, we hereby take this opportunity to make these nomenclatural changes for *Coffea* in an expedient manner. The newly acquired molecular data for *Psilanthus*, formal generic synonymy for *Coffea* and an enumeration of additional *Coffea* species formerly placed in *Psilanthus*, will be provided in a later publication by Davis *et al.* (in prep.).