



NOTE ON *YUSHANIA* vs *SINARUNDINARIA*: GOOD NEWS AND BAD

CHRIS STAPLETON

First the good news

In *Taxon* 47(Nov. 1998), 869–870, the Committee on Spermatophyta of the International Association for Plant Taxonomy reported their decision concerning the proposal to conserve the genus *Sinarundinaria* made by Dr Li De-Zhu in *Taxon* 45(May 1996), 321–322 (see Newsletter 26, 25–26). The Committee was unanimous, voting 12:0 in declining to recommend the conservation measure proposed.

Consequently *Yushania* will remain the correct name for the c. 80 spreading species currently placed in that genus. It will not be called *Sinarundinaria*, and it is confirmed that *Sinarundinaria* is a synonym of *Fargesia*. *Yushania confusa* remains the correct name for the spreading bamboo to which this name currently applies, and it will not be changed to *Sinarundinaria nitida*. As the name *Yushania confusa* continues to be applied to the spreading bamboo, and is not to be transferred to the fountain bamboo, a new name is not required for the fountain bamboo. On those grounds it could continue to be called *Fargesia nitida*.

And now the bad news

The authorship and place of publication of the name *Arundinaria nitida* has also been settled. It was stated in the decision that it should now be attributed to Mitford, published without a description in an anonymous article in *Gardeners' chronicle* 2(1895), 186 reporting a lecture given by Mitford, publication of the name in the article being made valid by reference to an earlier description of '*Arundinaria khasiana*' given by Bean in *Gardeners' chronicle* 1(1894), 301. This differs from my earlier opinion (see Newsletter 22, 17–22) that Stapf's publication of the name in the Kew Bulletin in January 1896 should be taken to represent the first valid publication of the name.

Unfortunately this leads to more problems. When *Arundinaria nitida* was published in *Gardeners' chronicle*, it was really presented as a new name for *Arundinaria khasiana*. The anonymous author did not seem to realise that Mitford intended the name to represent a new species. He probably thought that Mitford had merely discovered that *Arundinaria khasiana* came from China rather than Khasia, and so was changing its name. That clearly was a misunderstanding. There is an ambiguity here, and it could be possible to interpret the English wording favourably as indicating the publication of a new name. However, not everyone is prepared to accept such subtleties in our mother tongue. A direct literal reading of the text does certainly suggest that the anonymous author merely wanted to rename *Arundinaria khasiana*. This interpretation has been made by Ohrnberger (in *Bamboos of the World: Fargesia*. 1988), and recently by Gea Zijlstra at the University of Utrecht, who is responsible for a database of generic names and is considering how *Sinarundinaria* should be applied. It seems that this literal interpretation does have to be followed.

Therefore the consequences of the decision to follow Li's suggestion that *Gardeners' chronicle* article represents the first valid publication of *Arundinaria nitida* are rather serious. Firstly it means that the fountain bamboo needs a different name again! *Arundinaria nitida* is now technically just an illegitimate substitute name for the bamboo from the Khasia Hills of Assam, *Arundinaria khasiana* Munro. That species is now recognized to be a species of *Drepanostachyum*. Secondly, therefore, as *Arundinaria nitida* was given as the type species of *Sinarundinaria*, and as the name *Arundinaria nitida* now applies to the bamboo from the Khasia Hills of Assam, *Arundinaria khasiana* Munro, rather than the fountain bamboo, the generic name *Sinarundinaria* now applies to the genus we presently know as *Drepanostachyum*. As it was published earlier, *Sinarundinaria* takes priority over *Drepanostachyum*. Thus *Sinarundinaria* would have to be used instead of *Drepanostachyum*, in a similar manner to its replacement of *Yushania* in the original proposal.



Another proposal probably now has to be submitted in the hope of protecting *Arundinaria nitida* and *Drepanostachyum*, and to stabilize the use of these important names. Meanwhile, please continue to call the fountain bamboo *Arundinaria* (or *Fargesia*) *nitida*, and continue to treat *Sinarundinaria* as a synonym of *Fargesia*.