

Notes on the Bignoniaceae*

by

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At present only three representatives of the family are known to be native to Ceylon. Many others have been introduced as ornamentals, including *Spathodea campanulata* Beauv. which has become widely naturalized. Another, *Markhamia platycarpa*, which Worthington (*Ceylon Trees*, p. 340, 1959) has stated he introduced in 1928, may also be naturalized, but a statement on this must await further field study.

The three native taxa include a single species of each of the following genera: *Oroxylum*, *Dolichandrone* and *Stereospermum*. In the case of the last mentioned there has been considerable confusion concerning the proper name to be applied to our taxon. Trimen referred it to *S. chelonoides* DC. in his *Handbook to the Flora of Ceylon*, while Alston, noting the investigations of Haines (*Kew Bull.*, p. 121, 1922), referred it to *S. tetragonum* DC. in his *Supplement to the Handbook* (1931). The problem has centered around De Candolle's circumspection of *Bignonia chelonoides* L. f., and only recently has Chatterjee (*Bull. Bot. Soc. Bengal* 2: 69-70, 1948) clarified this problem and brought others relating to this taxon up to date.

Briefly, the problem can be summarized as follows. The type material for *B. chelonoides* L. f. was a very pubescent young specimen from South India near Tranquebar collected by Koenig. De Candolle, however, did not restrict his description to the pubescent plant when he transferred it to *Stereospermum*, but also included glabrous material from other localities. Haines (*Kew Bull.*, p. 121, 21, 1922) believed the two were not conspecific and, therefore, transferred the glabrous material to *S. tetragonum* DC. The latter was described by De Candolle at the same time as *S. chelonoides* and has proved to be conspecific with our Ceylon material, as well as the other more glabrous specimens. Chatterjee (1948), however, noted that the earliest specific epithet for this taxon is based on *Dipterosperma personatum* Hassk. and, therefore, it should be known as:

Stereospermum personatum (Hassk.) Chatterjee. *Bull. Bot. Soc. Bengal* 2: 70. 1948.

Dipterosperma personatum Hassk. *Flora* 25, pt. 2, Beibl. 28. 1842.

Stereospermum chelonoides Auct. et. A. DC. *Prodr.* 9: 210. 1845 p. p. tantum.

Stereospermum tetragonum A. DC. *Prodr.* 9: 210. 1845.

Nevertheless, we must still await further collections from the type area of *S. chelonoides* (L. f.) DC. to determine if the latter is really a distinct species. If it should prove to be conspecific with *S. personatum* (Hassk.) Chatterjee, then the correct name would revert to the original *S. chelonoides* DC.

(MS. received 16. 12. 70)

*Critical Notes on Ceylon Plants. IX,