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CITATION OF AUTHORITIES FOR LATIN NAMES

HENRY S. CONARD

To what extent is it significant to cite the names of authorities after the latin names of plants and animals? This is an old question but one which, it seems to me, is not yet fully settled. What is the best practice for you and for me?

Three methods of citation are in current use. Some cite only the originator of the combination of genus and species, as in Bailey's Standard Cyclopaedia of Horticulture (*Nuphar luteum*, Sibth. and Smith). Others cite always the originator of the specific name, followed by the author of the combination when that is by another person (*Nuphar luteum* (L.) Sibth. and Smith). Horticulturists often cite the name of the originator of a variety, with the date of origin or introduction. They also usually give the author's name in full, rather than in abbreviation [*Vitis Labrusca* "Concord" (E. Bull, 1853)].

In the horticulturist's method there is real merit. Every reader gets some historical data, plainly set forth. The other two methods are purely technical and of use only to professional botanists, albeit there is in the front of our manuals a glossary of abbreviations. There can be no doubt of the value of the citation of authorities—the absolute necessity—in monographic treatises. This would apply to Bailey's Cyclopaedia, Macbride's Slime Molds, Gray's Manual, Britton and Brown's Illustrated Flora, etc.

It is very different with the enumerator of a local flora, the ecologist, the morphologist, and indeed with everybody except the specialized systematist. For it is practically certain that writers other than systematic specialists do not critically work out the names and authorities for their plants. When I write *Rosa pratincola* Greene, do I mean to infer that I personally am convinced that my plant is *R. pratincola* Greene and not *R. arkansana* of American authors or of Porter, and not *R. blanda* Ait.? When I say *R. pratincola* I do it without any personal knowledge whatever of the work of Greene or Porter or Aiton on this species. And I suspect most folks are as ignorant. And what if I write *Crataegus coccinea* L.?

This situation has come very seriously to the front in working

over manuscript lists of plants, as also published lists, and herbaria. When I am reading a list of plants, or the name of only one plant, what I most need to know is where the plant grew, and by what means the given name was arrived at. Otherwise I am quite at sea, and often absolutely helpless. In actual practise, it becomes necessary to discover either by correspondence with the author of the paper, or by methods of "higher criticism" just what books were used in getting the names. And this is all I need to know. If your *Rosa blanda* was determined by aid of Gray's Manual ed. 5, it is one thing. But if you used Gray's ed. 7, the case is quite different. And in either case you would write *R. blanda* Ait. But it seems that the citation of Aiton is mere pedantry. For neither you nor I have any critical knowledge of what Aiton was writing about. We take it from Gray. It would therefore save time, space, printer's ink and general confusion if we simply state in text or footnote the bare truth: "The names in this paper are based on so-and-so's manual or monograph."

Of course this should not hinder one from using his independent judgment, where he has any. We would not hesitate to discuss *Elodea Iowensis* Wylie, just because it is not yet in Gray.

Happily the usage we are advocating is quite widespread already. Many texts and special papers omit the citation of authorities. It is not so common to find a statement of the methods or manuals actually used in getting the names. In a recent number of *Ecology*, a botanist cites authorities for every species; a zoologist cites no authorities. Both authors name the specialists who have provided the names. The "higher critic" can judge what the names mean from the names of the specialists, better than from the citations of authors. But the beginner gets nothing from either and has no recourse. Writers in *American Journal of Botany* show preference for the ordinary abbreviated citations. *Botanical Gazette* furnishes examples of many kinds. But we do not find anywhere the mention of the really necessary datum: What books were used for the source of the names?

In recent work on our local flora, we have omitted authorities entirely. The texts are relieved of material which bothers the uninitiated and is of no use to anybody. We frankly state that unless otherwise indicated all names are from Gray's Manual ed. 7, or from Bailey's Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture. If we should wander over into the floristics of mosses and algae, we should do similarly. And even if we listed fungi, we should be compelled to do the same. For no man can give monographic

study to all the species of any region. And we object to citing authorities of whom we know nothing. And we are quite willing to recognize the work of specialists in classification and nomenclature, even while they are still alive.

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