



## *Ficus laurifolia* (Moraceae) finally in position

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### Key words

*Ficus*  
Moraceae  
priority  
synonyms

**Abstract** The name *Ficus laurifolia* has to replace *F. ovata*. Confusion about origin of material in cultivation in several European gardens has created a good number of names.

**Published on** 28 July 2011

### INTRODUCTION

In the process of sorting out the nomenclature of the neotropical members of the genus *Ficus*, a number of problems were encountered partly dealing with names based on material with the Neotropics as supposed origin. One of the most troublesome names was *Ficus laurifolia* Lam.

A sheet containing a specimen of this species in the herbarium of George Clifford is an indication that it already existed in a European garden in the first half of the 18th century. It got widely distributed in European botanical gardens as a *Ficus* species of which the origin was supposed to be (parts of) the Neotropics. This material almost certainly provided the basis for the recognition of the beta variety of *F. indica* L. (1753: 1060). Greenhouse material of this species has been used to describe several species such as *F. laurifolia* Lam. (1792), *F. martinicensis* Willd. (1806), *F. rhododendrifolia* Kunth & C.D.Bouché (1847) who referred to the botanical garden name *F. neriifolia* and with a question mark to *F. martinicensis*. Miquel (1853) included the latter three names under *Urostigma kunthii*, and subsequently in 1867 under *Ficus kunthii*.

Probably due to the greenhouse conditions the features of type material of these names did not clearly show the similarities to the African species currently known as *F. ovata* Vahl. These became clear when material from Palermo was introduced into Egypt and matured there. It was Schweinfurth (1899) who retrieved and revived the oldest of the names, *F. laurifolia* Lam., with a full Latin description and a picture, based on material collected in Cairo, deposited in herbarium B and herbarium K, but the origin remained unclear and the link with *F. ovata* pending, except for that name being written by somebody on the sheet of Schweinfurth's collection in herbarium B, which, however, did not lead to the application of priority rules replacing *F. ovata* by *F. laurifolia*. From data provided it is clear that Schweinfurth named the material from Cairo 'Ficus ragusae', before linking it to Lamarck's name.

The name *F. laurifolia* has often been associated with the species with the conserved name *F. maxima* Mill. (Berg 2003), currently conserved with a conserved type and a member of subg. *Pharmacosycea*, a group of terrestrial trees without aerial roots.

Miller's name is based on the description by Sloane (1725) of a species of subg. *Urostigma* (thus with aerial roots) and occurring in Jamaica, probably the species currently known as *F. aurea* Nutt. Although Lamarck referred to Sloane's description and Miller's name, he described another species as he stated.

### *Ficus laurifolia* Lam.

*Ficus laurifolia* Lam. (1788) 495; Schweinf. (1899) t. 2578. — *Urostigma laurifolium* (Lam.) Miq. (1847) 539. — Type: ex Hort Paris, 1765, in herb. de Jussieu 16732 (holo P).

*Ficus ovata* Vahl (1805) 185. — Type: *Thonning s.n.* (holotype C, n.v., lost!) Ghana; Berg, Hijman & Weerdenburg (1984) 216; (1985) 230; Berg & Wiebes (1992) 165.

*Ficus martinicensis* Willden. (1806) 1137. — Type: *Herb. Willdenow no. 19287* (holo B), with as indication of origin: India occ.

*Ficus spectabilis* Kunth & C.D.Bouché (1847) 14; Kunth (1847) 235. — Type: Hort. Bot. Berol., origin unknown (holo B; iso U); Mildbraed & Burret (1911) 243.

*Ficus rhododendrifolia* Kunth & C.D.Bouché (1847) 16. — Type: Hort. Bot. Berol., origin unknown (holo B).

*Urostigma kunthii* Miq. (1853) 96. — *Ficus kunthii* (Miq.) Miq. (1867) 298, substitute name.

*Ficus bibracteata* Miq. (1867) 220. — Type: ex Hort. Berlin (holo U), sent in 1851, originally from the botanical garden of Torino.

*Ficus pergamenea* Galeotti ex Miq. (1867) 221. — *Urostigma pergamenum* Miq. (1857) 107, nom. nud. — Type: ex Hort. Palermo et Berlin (U), comprising a single leaf sent from the botanical garden of Palermo and two leaves sent from the botanical garden of Berlin, the former element hereby selected as the lectotype.

Notes — For other synonyms see: Berg et al. (1985) 230; Berg & Hijman (1989) 80; Berg & Wiebes (1992) 165; *Ficus africana* Kunth & C.D.Bouché (1847); *F. asymmetrica* Hutch. (1915); *F. brachypoda* Hutch. (1915); *F. buchneri* Warb. (1894); *F. johnstonii* Stapf (1906); *F. megaphylla* Warb. (1904); *F. megaphylla* var. *glabra* Warb. (1904); *F. octomelifolia* Warb. (1904); *F. ovata* var. *octomelifolia* (Warb.) Mildbr. & Burret (1911); *F. pseudo-elastic* Hiern (1900); *F. sapinii* De Wild. (1913); *F. spectabilis* Kunth & C.D.Bouché (1847); *F. tuberculosa* Hiern var. *elliptica* Hiern (1900); *F. vohsenii* Warb. (1894); *Urostigma ovatum* (Vahl) Miq. (1847).

*Ficus laurifolia* sensu Link (1822: 449), "nec Lam.", has been linked to *F. cerasifolia* and to *F. diospyrifolia* by Kunth & C.D.Bouché (1847: 16) although with doubt; *F. cerasifolia* is currently included in *F. pertusa* L.f., although with some doubt (see Berg 2007: 308). The identity of the type of *Ficus diospyrifolia* is quite uncertain.

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Mildbraed & Burret (1911) cited as garden names *F. sylvestris* Hort. Berol. 1846 in Ind. Sem Hort. Berol. (1847) 14 and *F. africana* Hort. Berol. 1846 in Kunth & Bouché (1847) 235. The latter name has been cited in Berg et al. (1984, 1985) and Berg & Wiebes (1992), however, without the indication 'nomen nudum'.

Miquel (1847: 539) also mentioned *F. nereifolia* and *F. rhododendrifolia* Kunth & C.D. Bouché under *Urostigma angustifolia*, currently a synonym of *Ficus citrifolia* Mill. (Berg 2007: 305).

Miquel (1853: 96) indicated Brazil as the possible origin of *Urostigma kunthii*.

*Ficus neriifolia* or *F. nereifolia* Hort. is not the Asian *F. neriifolia* Sm. (see Corner 1965: 39).

**Acknowledgements** The author is indebted to Mrs. Melanie Thomas (Kew) for supplying documentation on behalf of the preparation of the present paper.

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