In memoriam Jan-Frits Veldkamp
(31 March 1941 – 12 November 2017)

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Jan-Frits Veldkamp passed away on 12 November 2017 in hospital, in the course of a chemotherapy treatment compromised by an infection. Up to his last weeks, even in hospital, he was actively working to solve taxonomic and nomenclatural problems.

Jan Frederik (Jan-Frits, but mostly JF or JeF for friends) Veldkamp was born in Amsterdam but spent part of his elementary school years in Indonesia. Following his high school (Gymnasium-B) in the Netherlands he studied biology and chemistry for a year at Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota on a Fulbright grant. From 1961–1967 he studied biology at Leiden University, where he was destined to embark on a career as a Drosophila geneticist, when in 1965 he was ‘snatched’ by Professor C.G.G.J. van Steenis from the Genetics Lab to become a demonstrator at the Rijksherbarium. For his MSc projects he studied adaptations to sea dispersal in diaspores of coastal plants, taxonomy of Sarcotheca and Dapania (Oxalidaceae), the effects of temperature on certain attributes of Drosophila melanogaster, and chemotaxonomy of Callitriche (Plantaginaceae). In 1967 he joined the Rijksherbarium staff as a scientific officer, never to leave that institution throughout its metamorphoses as Rijksherbarium/Hortus Botanicus, National Herbarium of the Netherlands, and Botany section of the Naturalis Biodiversity Center. Initially he was to study seed structure of coastal plants, but soon Van Steenis rather brusly gave him the task to contribute to the Flora Malesiana (FM) effort as a grass taxonomist. In 1973 he defended his PhD thesis on A revision of Digitaria Haller (Gramineae) in Malesia. This was preceded by the treatment of Oxalidaceae for FM in 1972. By his own count, JeF would publish c. 370 papers (and counting), of which c. 220 are taxonomic and systematic contributions, major and minor, mostly on grasses, but a fair number also on representatives of 27 other flowering plant families, most notably Melastomataceae, Asteraceae, Zingiberaceae, Oxalidaceae and Rafflesiaceae. In addition, he submitted 14 nomenclatural proposals and wrote at least 80 reviews, mostly for Flora Malesiana Bulletin. He was the author of 431 names, mostly new combinations resulting from his great interest and expertise on nomenclatural matters, but also including over 115 new taxa (genera, species, subspecies and varieties), testifying to his talents as a keen observer and taxonomist. He maintained an annotated bibliography of his own publications, meticulously cross-referenced to his files, including not only major but also very minor, sometimes highly personal contributions. As this gives an excellent insight in the scrupulous way he worked and kept track of everything, we include this bibliography with only very light editing.

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Throughout his career JeF was an inspiring teacher who taught the course of plant taxonomy for almost 40 years, and also took a leading part in the international taxonomy courses under the auspices of UNICEF and MAB in Bogor in the 1980s. In the process he enthused numerous biology students to pursue taxonomic projects during their MSc programme or to aspire to a career in plant taxonomy. He also (co-)supervised numerous PhD students. He flavoured his lectures with numerous anecdotes, of which he had a great number in stock as a keen biohistorian. And many of his students and colleagues will remember the meticulous care with which he tracked and checked references. “Never believe something just because it is written somewhere, not even if you wrote it yourself” was his motto. His knowledge of the botanical literature and biography was phenomenal and he knew his way in our library and archives better than anyone else.

JeF was a prominent personality in our institute and in the international FM family. As a good classical taxonomist, in excellent command of botanical Latin and botanical nomenclature he generously helped many colleagues at home and abroad to solve nomenclatural puzzles or to obtain literature important for their studies. His dedication to the cause of FM was most visible during the years that he was the Editor of the *Flora Malesiana Bulletin*, between 1984 and 2008. He solved a chronic problem of shortage of news copy from the international FM Network in the Malesian region by filling literally hundreds of pages himself with very comprehensive bibliographical updates, book reviews, obituaries, points of view, and even short taxonomic papers. The service he thereby provided to isolated colleagues all over the world, in the times before large-scale internet availability and social media, cannot be overestimated. He was really angry and frustrated about the decision of the FM Board in 2007 to abandon the hard-copy publication of the Bulletin, with as a foreseeable consequence its total demise. But, stubbornly, he continued to compile the bibliographies, to the last weeks of his life attending monthly to the newly received journals in our library, and venting his frustration about the increasing numbers of e-subscriptions, which he could not leaf through.

Unfortunately his *magnum opus*, a family treatment of the grasses for FM, was never finished. This had much to do with the fact that he was easily distracted by the numerous requests for help to solve nomenclatural and other taxonomic puzzles.

JeF was a keen field botanist. In Malesia he took part in expeditions to the mountain ranges of Papua New Guinea (Mt Suckling 1972; Mt Tari 1975; Mt Kegum-Mt Burgers 1977; Mt Kerawa 1981 and Mt Fala-Mt Yule-Mt Otto 1989) and East Kalimantan (Gunung Raya 1982/83), but he collected in many other localities in Malesia or on other continents during short trips or holidays. He contributed altogether about 4,500 accessions to the L herbarium. He loved the Malesian region, its flora and its people, and he went there many times. Only last year (2017) he visited the Singapore Herbarium twice to complete his contribution on the grasses for the *Flora of Singapore*. During his travels, he was a prolific and consummate letter-writer, and kept a circle of friends and colleagues informed and amused with accounts of his exploits on an almost daily basis.

As a person JeF was a very kind and helpful colleague, although he sometimes tried to mask that behind a grumpy façade, not unlike that of his great example Professor Van Steenis. Like Van Steenis, he loved to tell botanical stories in monologue form during tea and coffee breaks, but his sense of humour prevented him from taking himself too seriously. He was a driving force behind the addiction of some card players on the Leiden staff to combine lunch with a good game of bridge (including Van Steenis, who was his bridge partner until his death in 1986). JeF is survived by three daughters and three granddaughters. We will miss his friendship and expertise. The FM community loses another prominent member.

A full bibliography and eponymy is appended.

### Eponymy

#### Genus


#### Species

- _Bulbophyllum veldkampii_ J.J.Verm. & P.O’Byrne, _Bulbophyllum Sulawesi_ (2011) 51, t. *Orchidaceae*
- _Rubus agricastrorum_ A.Beek, _Gorteria _38 (2016) 225. *Rosaceae*
BIBLIOGRAPHY

A more or less scientific bibliography of and by J.F. Veldkamp

[The bibliography below was compiled and kept up to date by JF Veldkamp himself. He also wrote the explanatory introduction, dated 3 July 2010.

We have edited the bibliography only very lightly, where necessary translating a few Dutch words. The numbers before the items refer to the numbered items in JFv’s dossier of reprints, mimeographs or xerox copies. This numbering is not always strictly chronological. The unnumbered items at the end of the list are posthumously published.]

To save somebody interested enough to make a bibliography of my scientific works a lot of time, I here present them in a more or less ordered form. There are some -a and -b numbers, in case of reprints, or small notes in larger, heterogeneous articles (e.g., no. 66), or articles that I did not know about until much later (e.g., 364). I did not renumber by date, as the publications have been entered in the order that they were received.

It will be noted that there are quite a number of joint authorships. To avoid any suggestion of parasitizing on my students and colleagues, an explanation seems in order. In many cases students at the Course in Advanced Plant Taxonomy, that I taught or assisted for perhaps 40 years, started a small revision or a training subject. They had put several weeks of tiro’s efforts in them, using the Leiden Herbarium’s precious material, and the results were sometimes of some scientific interest, so that it seemed a waste not to do something with their reports. However, I usually had to put in such a considerable time and effort to polish them up to an acceptable form, that a co-authorship seemed warranted. After 1982 I was ordered by Kalkman to do so in all cases where a student had done a subject under my guidance (but I got away with articles by Mark Sosef & Ron de Koning, and the one by Leni Duistermaat, although as much energy had been put in them as with the others). This arrangement had become required, as without a staff member as a co-author, the Herbarium would get no kudos from the University. In later publications I was invited as a co-author because of my transliteration of the original text and my general editorship, nomenclatural advise, literature research, etc., often a lot of work.

With Professor C.G.G.J. van Steenis (I never called him otherwise, although I was his bridge partner for years! Only the elder staff members ever called him Cees) I agree that it was no more than fair that a student should publish the subject of his Bachelor’s / Masters’ Degree under his / her own name: possibly the only scientific publication on his / her CV. They usually were first authors and must be regarded as responsible for the actual taxonomic work, I for the English and the more general paragraphs, such as the introduction, the nomenclature, and the notes.

In the case of Thonner’s Key (48) most of the effort was put into it by Rob Geesink and me, and quite a bit, but not the final touch, was done by Colin Ridsdale on Thonerstag Abend, Thursday evenings, later on Friday afternoons when Cees Kalkman – finally – saw the scientific value of this effort. Toon Leeuwenberg (WAG) was included in the authorship because he had started a translation, but didn’t have the time to do the gigantic job all by himself, although he already had made a contract with a publisher. After the handing over of his translation to us, which had to be rewritten completely for reasons of style and structure, only the chapter on eponymy remained his sole contribution. Besides a good part of the key, I wrote all the introductory chapters, the key to the Monocots, the Glossary, and most of the Index, for which Rob had made in impres- sive scroll on a huge wooden spindle.

The Manual (88) was for the larger part written by me, too, as one can see. It had started as an idea grown during the work on Thonner’s Key to have a companion volume based on Pulle’s Compendium and the Manual we had made over the years for the Course at the Herbarium. For the Course in Bogor this was exactly what was needed and De Vogel did little more than formatting the text on his computer.

The Flora Malesiana Bulletin, of which I became Editor in 1983, has as such not been included, although sometimes more than 50 % of my time had gone into compiling the Bibliographies, editing general chapters, contributions, and preparing the indices. It was a sad day when Erik Smets behind my back changed my editorial to include a note that the Bulletin would be available on the Internet, only. I was not informed of this change and I only became aware of it through people who pointed it out to me. This was apparently announced and adopted without further discussion at the Board Meeting of the Flora Malesiana Symposium in Leiden, 2007. Contrary to custom I was not invited to attend that, nor was I informed beforehand of this move. This decision was made, but there was no implementation of how this was going to take place. Thus the FMB died a silent death. Yet, I kept on gathering the data for the Bibliography, just in case. If this was not done, such information could never be retrieved again. At a later meeting of editors of the journals published by the National Herbarium of The Netherlands, Leiden University branch, I was not invited, either, and only afterwards heard that it had taken place. Half-hearted excuses were made by Smets and Marco Roos. Smets, nor Roos, ever inquired about what I was doing. This was otherwise all right by me. Obviously, this lack of interest and commitment caused a lot of resentment on my side.

‘Ghost papers’

The treatment of the Averrhoaceae as attributed to me by Henry Airy Shaw (1a, b) is incorrect. I did write it, but to show that the ‘family’ was based on Hutchinson’s erroneous observations. (I had to buy my own copy of 1b!)

Paper 6 with Wil Vreezen was written by her, partly based on my Master’s thesis in Genetics; because the Staff of the Department did not believe the results, she did it all over again, and came to the same conclusions ... I never knew about the paper until I got the reprints!

The papers 15 and 20 were written by Van Steenis without the knowledge of the co-authors! No doubt, he meant well, but he could have told us! I only saw them when in proof and did not very much like what I saw. Emmy van Nieuwkoop, his devoted secretary for many years, said I could change what I thought fit, for Van Steenis never read these things again, and, in the unlikely case that he did, it would be too late, anyway. I never got any flack.

The joint papers with Ben Stone (28) and Peter Stevens (39) were written by them, based on our correspondence.


289. Kumar P, Rawat GS, Veldkamp JF. 2009. (033) Proposal to broaden the scope of Art. 37.5 allowing an illustration as a type when it is “impossible” to preserve a specimen. Taxon 58: 664–665.


2010


2014


2015


2016


2017


In print


– Veldkamp JF: Schmidellia, an enigmatic new genus of Gramineae from Laos, Adansonia III, accepted.