Lectotypification of the name *Cucumis colocynthis* L.  
(Cucurbitaceae : Benincaseae)

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Abstract

Lectotype for the Linnaean name *Cucumis colocynthis* has been designated. The protologue of the name and relevant literature have been evaluated. An illustration by Mattioli in De Plantis Epitome Utilissima has been assigned as lectotype for the taxon.

Key words: Lectotype; Linnaeus; *Cucumis*

INTRODUCTION

The genus *Citrullus* Schrader comprises of approximately seven species distributed in arid and semi-arid tropics of India, Africa and Australia (Schaefer & Renner 2011; Chomicki & Renner 2015). It includes a number of cultivated taxa, known for their economic and medicinal uses (Renner & al. 2017). *Cucumis colocynthis* L. is basionym of *Citrullus colocynthis* (L.) Schrad., commonly called Colocynth or Bitter Apple and is reported from Northern Africa (Dane & al. 2007; Chomicki & Renner 2015). It is commonly found in semi-deserts and xeric bushlands (Schaefer & Renner 2011). In the present communication, we have designated a lectotype for *Cucumis colocynthis* based on the publication of Linnaeus.

The Protologue of *Citrullus colocynthis* (1838: 414) consists of a synonym *Cucumis colocynthis* followed by a diagnosis but no specimen has been cited under the species. Even in the protologue of *Cucumis colocynthis*, Linnaeus did not cite any specimen and therefore all uncited specimens and illustrations will have equal priority in designating lectotype (Art. 9.12 of the ICN, McNeill & al. 2012).

Further, Linnaeus mentioned five citations to previous works in the protologue of *Cucumis colocynthis: Hortus upsaliensis* (Linnaeus 1748: 293), *Materia medica* (Linnaeus 1749: 157), *Florae leydensis prodromus* (Royen 1740: 263), *Pinax Theatri botanici* (Bauhin 1671: 313) and *De plantis epitome utilissima* (Mattioli 1586: 982).

No specimen was cited by Linnaeus, Royen or Bauhin for the species in their works. However, Mattioli (1586: 982) provided an illustration (Figure 1) that matches the Linnaean diagnosis. This is the same element cited by Jarvis (2007: 464) as representing original material.

As Linnaeus did not cite any specimen, we searched for original material of *Cucumis colocynthis* from the collections deposited at LINN herbarium. Three sheets of *C. colocynthis* are present there (sheet no. 1152.1, 1152.2 and 1152.3, images available at: http://linnean-online.org/11812/) but none of those were found to be the original material. In
Figure 1. Lectotype of *Ciucumis colocynthis* L.: Illustration in Mattioli’s *De plantis epitome utilissima* (1586: 982).
the earlier attempt to provide type for the Linnaean Plant names, Jeffrey (1977) had incorrectly treated 1152.1 (LINN) as the type of the taxon. Since, these collections lack annotation in *Species Plantarum* number (i.e. ‘1’) and were a post-1753 addition to the herbarium and therefore, cannot be considered as the original material for the name (Renner & Pandey 2013).

In other Linnaean and Linnaean-linked herbaria no original material could be traced for *Cucumis colocynthis*. Mattioli’s illustration is the only original material and thus, we designated it here as lectotype for *Cucumis colocynthis* which supersedes the earlier lectotype designated by Jeffrey (1977: 676).

*Cucumis colocynthis* L., Sp. Pl.: 1011. 1753

Lectotype (designated here): [illustration] in Mattioli, Pl. Epit.: 982, 1586. – For an image of the lectotype, see Figure 1.

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LITERATURE CITED


