
Research Article

Nomenclatural novelties in *Phyllanthus* L. (Phyllanthaceae)

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Abstract: Following the expanded generic concept adopted by Govaerts et al. (2026), we here propose three replacement names: *Phyllanthus govaertsii* Kottaim. & Arigela, *P. herbertii* Kottaim., Arigela & C. Rajasekar, and *P. pingtaoi* Kottaim. & Arigela. These names replace the illegitimate later homonyms *P. pinifolius* (J.T. Hunter & J.J. Bruhl) Govaerts & Christenh., *P. oblongifolius* (Airy Shaw) Govaerts & Christenh., and *Phyllanthus tsiangii* (P.T. Li) Govaerts & Christenh., respectively.

Keywords: China, Endemic, *Glochidion*, IUCN, *Sauropus*.

Introduction

The delimitation of the genus *Phyllanthus* L. has remained a subject of taxonomic debate for more than two centuries (Govaerts et al., 2026), with many botanists revising their views on its classification during the course of their careers (Chakrabarty & Balakrishnan, 2009, 2012, 2018). As a result, the circumscription and classification of the genus have historically been inconsistent and unstable (Bouman et al., 2021). Molecular phylogenetic studies of Phyllanthaceae have demonstrated that maintaining monophyly requires either the merging or the recognition of several segregate genera (Bouman et al. 2021, 2022). However, Govaerts et al., (2026) identified a number of limitations in the treatment proposed by Bouman et al., (2022) and advocated an expanded circumscription of *Phyllanthus*. In their treatment, *Phyllanthus* sensu lato is resurrected by incorporating all genera segregated by Bouman et al., (2022), as well as *Breynia*, *Glochidion* and *Synostemon*.

In the present paper, the concept of Govaerts et al., (2026) is accepted and followed. Accordingly, three replacement names *Phyllanthus govaertsii* Kottaim. & Arigela, *P. herbertii* Kottaim., Arigela & C. Rajasekar, and *P. pingtaoi* Kottaim. & Arigela are proposed here to replace the illegitimate later homonyms *P. pinifolius* (J.T. Hunter & J.J. Bruhl) Govaerts & Christenh., *P. oblongifolius* (Airy Shaw) Govaerts & Christenh., and *Phyllanthus tsiangii* (P.T. Li) Govaerts & Christenh., respectively.

Nomenclature

***Phyllanthus govaertsii* Kottaim. & Arigela, nom. nov.**

≡ *Sauropus stenocladus* subsp. *pinifolius* J.T.Hunter & J.J.Bruhl, Nuytsia 11(2): 177. 1997.

≡ *Phyllanthus pinifolius* (J.T.Hunter & J.J.Bruhl) Govaerts & Christenh., Nelumbo 68(1): 144. 2026, *nom. illeg.*, non *Phyllanthus pinifolius* Baill., Adansonia 5: 353. 1865.

Etymology: The specific epithet '*govaertsii*' is named in honour of Rafaël Herman Anna Govaerts (Govaerts), botanist and taxonomist at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to plant taxonomy.

Distribution: Australia (Northern Territory). Endemic (Hunter & Bruhl 1997; Telford et al. 2019).

***Phyllanthus herbertii* Kottaim., Arigela & C.Rajasekar, nom. nov.**

≡ *Glochidion oblongifolium* Airy Shaw, Kew Bull. 33: 28. 1978.

≡ *Phyllanthus oblongifolius* (Airy Shaw) Govaerts & Christenh. in Govaerts et al., Nelumbo 68(1): 143. 2026 *nom. illeg.*, non *P. oblongifolus* Dennst., Schlüssel Hortus Malab.: 30. 1818 nec *P. oblongifolius* Pax, H.G.A.Engler & K.A.E.Prantl, Nat. Pflanzenfam. 3(5): 19. 1890.

Etymology: Named in honour of Herbert Kenneth Airy Shaw (1902–1985), who first recognized this species as distinct, and in recognition of his pioneering studies of *Glochidion* and Phyllanthaceae in Malesia.

Distribution: New Guinea. Endemic (Airy Shaw 1978).

***Phyllanthus pingtaoi* Kottaim. & Arigela, nom. nov.**

≡ *Sauropus tsiangii* P.T.Li, Acta Phytotax. Sin. 25(2): 135. 1987.

≡ *Phyllanthus tsiangii* (P.T.Li) Govaerts & Christenh., Nelumbo 68(1): 147. 2026, *nom. illeg.*, non *Phyllanthus tsiangii* P.T.Li, Acta Phytotax. Sin. 25(5): 375. 1987, *nom. illeg.*

Etymology: The specific epithet '*pingtaoi*' is named in honour of Prof. Ping Tao Li (P.T.Li), in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the Chinese Phyllanthaceae.

Distribution: China (SW. Guangxi). Endemic (Li 1987; Welzen et al. 2014).

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