

Melastomataceae are the eighth-largest plant family within angiosperms, with an estimated 5000–5600 known species (Christenhusz *et al.*, 2017). The group is pantropical, with a few elements encroaching into subtropical and temperate environments, and the bulk of diversity occurring in the Neotropics (70%). Due to persisting controversy regarding the timing and geographic origin of Melastomataceae (Renner *et al.*, 2001; Morley & Dick, 2003; Renner, 2004), its historical evolution remains uncertain. The circumscription of the family has varied, with the exclusion (Clausen & Renner, 2001) or inclusion (APG II, 2003; APG III, 2009) of the Memecylaceae, but most recent treatments have considered the Memecylaceae (i.e., sub-family Olisbeoideae) as part of Melastomataceae. Their geographical distribution ranges from sea level to high elevation montane forests and consequently, species occur in a range of different habitats, and are characterized by a highly diverse vegetative and reproductive morphology, and associated pollination syndromes. The high morphological diversity has been the source of much taxonomic and nomenclatural uncertainty, especially in some of the largest genera.

Regardless of the recent significant advances in plant molecular systematics, basic studies on taxonomy and morphology are much needed to generate hypotheses on the diversity and distribution of plant groups. This special issue includes six papers that propose new species or aim to clarify taxonomic and nomenclatural ambiguity in a few charismatic groups. The first is an annotated checklist of Malesian *Medinilla* by Kartonegoro. The author lists 242 species and 2 varieties, of which 238 species and 2 varieties are endemic to the Malesian region. Two of the six contributions describe new species, *Boyania kenwurdackii* from Guyana (Michelangeli, this issue) and *Sonerila lundinii* from India (Resmi *et al.*, this issue). The newly described *Sonerila*

species from southern Western Ghats is closely allied to *S. pedunculosa*, an endemic species with a restricted distribution in Sri Lanka. The ambiguous occurrence of *S. pedunculosa* in South India is also clarified. *Sonerila*'s poorly understood diversity and distribution in India and Sri Lanka underline the necessity of more research on the genus, particularly on descriptive taxonomy and morphology. Resmi and Nampy (this issue) revisited the caulescent, tuberous species of Indian *Sonerila* based on field and herbarium studies. Despite scattered treatments in various local and regional floras, there has been no holistic study on *Sonerila* in India after Clarke's treatment in Hooker's *Flora of British India* (1879). The systematic account of caulescent tuberous *Sonerila* with seven species gives a first insight into revisionary studies of this group in India. A new addition to the Indian Flora is recorded by Dash *et al.* (this issue) for *Sarcopyramis nepalensis* var. *bodinieri*, with a discussion on the taxonomy, nomenclature and typification of the names *S. bodinieri* H.Lév. and *S. nepalensis* Wall. Finally, Lahiri *et al.* (this issue) propose the lectotypification of *Medinilla himalayana* Hook.f. ex Triana, which represents another contribution from Indian authors to Melastomataceae research.

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Thank you

Nico Cellinese & Santhosh Nampy
The Editors, Melastomataceae Special issue

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