

News from France

A Short Update on the Pineapple Taxonomy Debate

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In the 2014 Pineapple News issue (n°21), Butcher and Gouda (2014) presented their views on pineapple taxonomy, considering that most pineapples are cultivars and that only three taxa, described from wild materials, should be recognized: *Ananas ananassoides*, *A. parguazensis*, and *A. sagenaria* (syn. *A. macrodontes*). *Ananas* 'Bracteatus', 'Comosus', and 'Erectifolius' would be considered cultivars.

In my answer to Butcher and Gouda, I refuted their proposal to discard cultivated pineapples from the botanical classification and summarized the main historical problems that have affected pineapple taxonomy (Coppens d'Eeckenbrugge, 2014). This answer was naturally targeted at the 'Pineapple People' (I sincerely enjoyed how Butcher and Gouda created this expression for our tribe). At a wider scale, a more general and formal answer was needed to get rid of the confusions that hamper non-specialists from understanding our classification and comparing it with previous ones. With the help of a recognized expert in formal taxonomy, I undertook a revision of the synonyms for *Ananas macrodontes* Morren, *A. comosus* (L.) Merr., and its five botanical varieties, with detailed explanations on past confusions and errors. The resulting paper has been submitted to a specialized journal and has gone through the first phase of review. I would have been happy to announce here its publication, however editorial delays have been longer than anticipated.

When this work is published, what will be its practical impact for the Pineapple People? In fact, the classification will not be modified in essence. The only change will be strictly nomenclatural, as the most common wild pineapple that was designated as '*A. comosus* var. *ananassoides* (Baker) Coppens & Leal' will then be designated '*A. comosus* var. *microstachys* (Mez) L.B. Smith', following priority rules for names of botanical varieties. In any case, the adjective 'microstachys', meaning "very small spike", was an excellent proposal from Mez (1892) to describe very concisely this wild form.

References

- Butcher, D. and Gouda, E. 2014. Most *Ananas* are cultivars. Pineapple News No. 21: 9 -11. <http://www.ishs-horticulture.org/workinggroups/pineapple/PineNews21.pdf>.
- Coppens d'Eeckenbrugge, G. 2014. Pineapple taxonomy: Species, botanical varieties and cultivars, and their importance in understanding and managing pineapple diversity. Pineapple News No. 21: 35 -39. <http://www.ishs-horticulture.org/workinggroups/pineapple/PineNews21.pdf>
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