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A PROPOSED ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR THE PUBLICATION OF NEW PLANT NAMES

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There are four basic requirements for the valid publication of new plant names, as laid down in the *International Code of Botanical Nomenclature* (ICBN). These are that the names must (1) be effectively published (*i.e.* published in printed matter that is available to the general public, or at least to botanists generally), (2) have a form that complies with rules in the ICBN (*i.e.* be in Latin with correct grammatical endings), (3) be accompanied by a description or diagnosis in Latin, and (4) be accompanied by citation of a type (in most cases a preserved specimen deposited in a herbarium, to serve as a permanent reference for identification). Now an additional requirement is likely to be introduced, with effect from 1st January 2000.

If the new rule is approved at the 1999 International Botanical Congress, from 1st January 2000 onwards all new names of plants and fungi must be registered in order to be validly published. Registration of new names can be achieved in one of two ways. One is to publish in a periodical that is accredited for this purpose. All such periodicals will be listed on the World Wide Web and will be listed annually in the taxonomic periodical *Taxon*. The other way is for the author to submit the name for registration, either direct to the co-ordinating centre in Berlin or through a national registration office.

Taxonomists in East Africa must be ready to comply with this new requirement. When publishing new names, it is important to know whether or not the chosen periodical is accredited for registration purposes. If it is not, then the registration procedure must be followed by the author. Publishers of periodicals, such as the *Journal of East African Natural History*, should consider seeking the status of an accredited periodical for the benefit of their authors.

A trial period to test the scheme is already under way, having started this year. Further details of the registration scheme will be published soon in the *Journal of East African Natural History*, and should be consulted by all those proposing to publish new names (see Wilson, this issue). However, there are some objections to this new system and its adoption is by no means certain.

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