

# ARNOLDIA



A continuation of the  
BULLETIN OF POPULAR INFORMATION  
of the Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University

---

VOLUME 18

DECEMBER 26, 1958

NUMBER 12

---

## THE NEW INTERNATIONAL CODE OF NOMENCLATURE FOR CULTIVATED PLANTS

ALL those who are interested in the naming of new horticultural varieties of plants should certainly obtain a copy of this new code. It was published by The International Union of Biological Sciences, Utrecht, Netherlands, in 1958, and is available in the United States only from the Secretary of the American Horticultural Council, Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Plain 30, Mass., for fifty cents, postpaid. It has been widely adopted already and it is hoped will be the set of rules which will be followed universally in the naming of new horticultural varieties. To give *Arnoldia* subscribers a little background, the Preface to this code is here reproduced for their information:

“In the introduction to the *International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants*, published in 1953, Mr. W. T. Stearn gave a scholarly history of codes for the naming of cultivated plants from their beginnings in 1847.

“The 1953 Code was formulated and adopted by The International Botanical Congress Committee for the Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants and the International Committee on Horticultural Nomenclature and Registration at the Thirteenth International Horticultural Congress, London, September 1952. Though the Code had been drawn up primarily by those interested in horticulture, agriculturists and foresters welcomed it as a basis for the naming of their crops, and the problem arose of finding a suitable body, on which agriculturists, foresters and horticulturists could all be represented, to take responsibility for future editions.

“At the Fourteenth International Horticultural Congress held at Scheveningen in 1955, it was agreed to ask the International Union of Biological Sciences whether the Commission for the Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants which they had set up under their Division of Botany could undertake this work. The Union readily agreed, and it was decided that the Commission should be enlarged to twenty-

four members (with power to co-opt), consisting of approximately equal numbers representing agriculture, forestry and horticulture. The existing Chairman (Dr. Roger de Vilmorin) was confirmed in office, and the remaining members were appointed by the Union; those representing agriculture and forestry after consultation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Union of Forest Research Organizations respectively and those representing horticulture on the nomination of the Fourteenth International Horticultural Congress. The Commission now consists of the following members:

*Chairman:*

Dr. R. DE VILMORIN, Services scientifiques Vilmorin-Andrieux, Verrières-le-Buisson (S. & O.), France.

*Rapporteur:*

Mr. J. S. L. GILMOUR, University Botanic Garden, Cambridge, England.

*Secretary:*

Dr. H. R. FLETCHER, Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, 4, Scotland.

*Commission Members*

*Agricultural Representatives:*

Dr. J. W. GREGOR — Scottish Plant Breeding Station, Pentlandsfield, Roslin, Midlothian, Scotland.

Mr. F. R. HORNE — National Institute of Agricultural Botany, Huntingdon Road, Cambridge, England.

Dr. P. S. HUDSON — Commonwealth Bureau of Plant Breeding and Genetics, Cambridge, England.

Dr. JORGE LEÓN — Plant Industry Department, Inter-American Institute for Agricultural Science, Turrialba, Costa Rica.

Dr. G. NILSSON-LEISSNER — Swedish State Seed Testing Station, Stockholm 19, Sweden.

Dr. F. E. NIJDAM — Stichting voor Plantenveredeling, Nude 66, Wageningen, Netherlands.

Dr. P. B. PAL — Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi, India.

Mr. T. A. RUSSELL — Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, England.

Dr. E. N. SINSKAYA — Institute of Plant Industry, Herzenstreet 44, Leningrad, U.S.S.R.

Dr. M. G. WEISS — Field Crops Research Branch, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Beltsville, Maryland, U.S.A.

*Forestry Representatives:*

Dr. R. D. JOHNSTON — Forest Botanist, Forestry and Timber Bureau, Canberra, Australia.

Dr. W. LANGNER — Bundesanstalt für Forst- und Holzwirtschaft, 24a Schmalenbeck über Ahrensberg, Germany.

- Dr. E. L. LITTLE JR. — Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, DC., U.S.A.
- Mr. J. D. MATTHEWS — Forest Research Station, Alice Holt Lodge, Wrecclesham, Farnham, Surrey, England.
- Dr. MASATAKA OHMATA — Government Forest Experiment Station, 4-770 Shimomenguro, Meguro-Ku, Tokyo, Japan.
- M. J. POURTET — Ecole Nationale des Eaux et Forêts, 14 Rue Girardet, Nancy, France.

*Horticultural Representatives:*

- Dr. B. K. BOOM — Instituut voor Veredeling van Tuinbouwgewassen, Postbus 7, Wageningen, Netherlands.
- Dr. H. R. FLETCHER — Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, 4, Scotland.
- Mr. J. S. L. GILMOUR — University Botanic Garden, Cambridge, England.
- Dr. N. HYLANDER — Institute of Systematic Botany, University of Uppsala, Uppsala 1, Sweden.
- Dr. G. H. M. LAWRENCE — Bailey Hortorium, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, U.S.A.
- Dr. R. MAATSCH — Hochschule für Gartenbau und Landeskultur, Burgweg 11, Hannover-Herrenhausen, Germany.
- Mr. J. M. S. POTTER — National Fruit Trials, Brogdale Farm, Faversham, Kent, England.
- Dr. A. THORSRUD — Institut for Blomsterdyrking, Norges Landbruksheiskole, Vollebakk, Norway.

“There is an Executive Committee consisting of the three officers and an Editorial Committee with the following membership: H. R. FLETCHER, J. S. L. GILMOUR, G. H. M. LAWRENCE, E. L. LITTLE JR., G. NILSSON-LEISSNER, R. DE VILMORIN.

“The new Commission held its first meeting at the University of Utrecht from 21-23 November 1956, when it considered proposals, received from many organizations and individuals, for the modification of the 1953 Code to improve it generally and to render it equally applicable to agriculture, forestry and horticulture. As a result of this meeting, a first draft for a new Code was widely circulated for comment during 1957. The resulting proposals were considered at a second meeting of the Commission held in London from 4-6 December 1957, and the text now published has been prepared by the Editorial Committee on the basis of decisions taken at that meeting.

“The Code becomes effective from the date of its publication, and is submitted for endorsement for horticulture to the Fifteenth International Horticultural Congress to be held at Nice in April 1958, for agriculture to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and for forestry to the International Union of Forest Research Organizations.

“The present Code is considerably shorter than its predecessor, and, it is hoped, more logically arranged and simpler to use, though certain articles, of concern mainly to registration authorities and those naming new cultivars, must necessarily be somewhat technical. There are no alterations in the basic principles of the 1953 Code, but there are several major changes which will, the Commission hopes, make the new Code more acceptable to users. The following are, perhaps, the most important :

“(1) *Any language* (instead of only those in Roman characters) may be used for the description of a new cultivar, though there is a strong recommendation to use — or add a translation in — English, French, German, Russian or Spanish.

“(2) It is made clear that a cultivar name, to be legitimate under the Code, must, from 1 January 1959 onwards, be published *with a description*, but that before this date, a description is not necessary.

“(3) It is laid down that, while ‘cultivar’ is the technical, international term for what in English is known as a ‘variety’ (‘Sorte’ in German, ‘sort’ in Scandinavian languages, etc.), anyone is free, without violating the Code, to use his own national term if he so wishes; and this is emphasised by placing ‘variety’ in brackets after ‘cultivar’ throughout the Code. The term ‘cultivar’, however, is rapidly gaining favour in many groups of cultivated plants, as a convenient and unambiguous word for general use.

“(4) A broader view has been taken of the use of ‘commercial synonyms’. The Commission fully realises that, if the Code is to be generally accepted, account must be taken of all reasonable commercial practices in the crops concerned.

“(5) Registration of names by official registration authorities is treated much more fully, and recommendations to such authorities, approved by the Fourteenth International Horticultural Congress, are included as Appendix I. The Commission attaches great importance to registration as a means for stabilizing names, and hopes that authorities will be set up as rapidly as possible to cover all the major cultivated crops.

“(6) The problems arising from re-selected cultivars have been clarified, and the term ‘strain’ and its equivalents have been excluded from the Code.

“(7) It is clearly indicated which articles are retroactive, and which apply only to the future.

“The Commission is confident that the Code will be widely used all over the world and wishes to encourage the publication of authorized translations and versions adapted to particular crops. As stated on the back of the title page, permission for all such translations and adaptations must be obtained through the publishers, the International Union of Biological Sciences, who will consult the Commission on each application.”

This Code was endorsed by the Fifteenth International Horticultural Congress held at Nice, France, in April 1958.

DONALD WYMAN