INTERNATIONAL RULES OF BOTANICAL NOMENCLATURE


THE authors have performed a useful service by compiling and the publisher by presenting in book form the now universally used set of rules governing botanical nomenclature. Adopted by the International Botanical Congress at Amsterdam in 1935 the code is embodied in 74 articles and 49 recommendations. The first 18 articles, referred to as principles, set forth the aims and general principles involved in scientific nomenclature; the remainder (rules) are specific in governing the application of names. "The object of the rules (Art. 19-74) is to put the nomenclature of the past into order and to provide for that of the future. They are always retroactive: names—contrary to a rule—cannot be maintained. The recommendations deal with subsidiary points, their object being to bring about greater uniformity and clearness especially in future nomenclature—" (Art. 2).

Priority is the first principle of nomenclature. The accepted name for a group (family, genus, species, etc.) is the earliest that is in accordance with the rules of nomenclature, (Art. 16.) "The application of names of taxonomic groups is determined by nomenclatural types. The type of — a generic name is a species, that of a species or group of lower rank is usually a specimen or preparation." (Art. 18.) The type concept is perhaps the most important feature of modern nomenclature. "However, to avoid disadvantageous changes in the nomenclature of genera — the Rules provide a list of names which must be retained as exceptions." (Art. 2.)

This list (Nomina Generica Conservanda) occupies 60 of the 118 pages of the present publication. Such well known names as Spirogyra, Ectocarpus, Agaricus, Rhizopus, Caryya, Capsella, Wisteria, Taraxacum are a few of about a thousand thus protected from change. Others will probably be added at future congresses.

Fernald has estimated that 30% of the names to be used in his forthcoming 8th edition of Gray's Manual will differ from those used in the 7th edition. This represents a period of approximately 40 years and the differences represent an advance toward a stable nomenclature based on internationally formulated and used rules. "Everyone is inconvenienced by change from the rut in which he has proceeded but ruts are not the best routes to thorough understanding" (Rhodora 50:247, 1948).

It should be remembered, however, that differences in scientific names have occurred for two general reasons, one of which has to do with conformity to rules (nomenclature), the other with differences in entity concept, that is, breaking up of larger into smaller genera or of species into smaller species, varieties, etc. (classification). The latter feature is not covered by rules of nomenclature—it is and will remain a matter to be decided by individual workers. The names used by conservatives (lumpers) and liberals (splitters) are regulated by the Code: the entities which they recognize are not.

These ideas should be generally understood. To those who are actively engaged in monographic floristic work they are a commonplace. Familiarity with the present publication will aid in their understanding by those whose interests lie outside of "taxonomy" but within the large field of plant science.—H. A. WAHL.

A CATALOGUE OF INSECTICIDES AND FUNGICIDES


The scope of the catalogue is indicated by the chapter headings. For Vol. I they are: Introduction (in which the arrangement of the various compounds, an original coding system, and other details are explained), Chemical Insecticides, Condensation Products-Insecticides, Miscellaneous Insecticides, References and Author Index, and a numerical Patent List. For Vol. II they are: Introduction (exact reproduction of the one in Vol. I.), Chemical Fungicides, Condensation Products, Plant Product Fungicides, Miscellaneous Fungicides, Plant Insecticides, Miscellaneous Plant Products, References and Author Index, numerical Patent List, and Index of Chemical Compounds.

These two volumes are claimed to cover "the results of biological testing on a group of approximately 10,000 materials" in which "every effort has been made to make this catalogue as complete as possible up to January, 1944". The reviewer has not attempted to determine whether or not any material has been omitted; it should be noted that as regards insecticides, the references to biological testing are largely concerned with toxicological studies, and where such are available in the literature, few references are given to field tests nor are all the insects included on which tests have been made. At least, this is true with the better known insecticides. The author states "Since the main purpose of