

## THE VALIDITY OF THE GENERIC NAME PTERETIS

M. L. FERNALD

THE Ostrich-Fern of Eurasia, first placed by Linnaeus in *Osmunda*, was separated by Willdenow, Enum. 1071 (1809) as the genus *Struthiopteris* (L.) Willd.; but the ancient generic name *Struthiopteris* had already been applied, after 1753, to other genera: especially by Weis in 1770 for the plant called by Linnaeus (1753) *Osmunda spicant* and later called *Blechnum spicant* (L.) Roth (1794). The name *Struthiopteris* Willd. (1809) was, therefore, a later homonym and has until recently been replaced by *Matteuccia* Todaro (1866). In 1818, however, Rafinesque had substituted for *Struthiopteris* Willd., which was an illegitimate name because of the earlier *Struthiopteris* of Weis (1770), the name *Pteretis* Raf. in Am. Mo. Mag. Crit. Rev. ii. 268 (1818), a new name given as a substitute for *Struthiopteris* Willd. (1809), not Weis (1770). This matter was discussed in great detail by Nieuwland in Am. Midl. Nat. iii. 194-197 (1914), although Nieuwland, with his devotion to pre-Linnaean names, somewhat involved the discussion. His summarizing paragraph, omitting the references prior to 1753, was as follows:

**Pteretis** Raf. Am. Month. Mag., II., p. 268, (1818).

*Matteuc[c]ia* Todaro, Geor. Sci. Nat. Palermo, I., p. 235, (1866).

*Stri[u]thiopteris* Willd. Enum. p. 1071, (1809) . . . not *Struthiopteris*  
. . . Weiss [Weis] . . . = *Lomaria Spicant* (Linn.) Desvaux.

Nieuwland's taking up of *Pteretis* was the correct course, in spite of his typographic carelessness and his error, under the new combination *Pteretis Struthiopteris* (Linn.) Nieuwland, in citing the basonym as "*Matteucia Struthiopteris* Linn. Sp. Pl. p. 1066, (1753)" instead of *Osmunda Struthiopteris*, the name used by Linnaeus.

Others correctly took up *Pteretis* (1818) as a properly published generic name; but Copeland, Gen. Fil. 103 (1947), using *Matteuccia* (1866), rejects *Pteretis* (1818) because it "was never tolerably published". However, admitting the eccentricity of Rafinesque's methods, there seems to be no question of its validity, as indicated in the International Rules of Botanical Nomenclature, Art. 42 (2), which reads:



A name of a genus is not validly published unless it is accompanied . . . (2) by the citation of a previously and effectively published description of the genus under another name.

As an example of such valid publication the Rules give

*Thuspeinantha* Th. Dur. (*Ind. Gen. Phanerog.* p. x: 1888), accompanied by a reference to the previously described genus *Tapeinanthus* Boiss. (non Herb.).

*Pteretis* Raf. was quite parallel with *Thuspeinantha*: the replacement of an invalid earlier name of a genus which was properly described; and as such it was listed by Christensen, *Ind. Fil. Suppl.* ii, 30 (1917). The name was taken up by me in *RHODORA*, xxxvii. 219 (1935) and by Small, *Ferns Vic. N. Y.* 140 (1935); by Merrill in *Am. Fern. Journ.* xxxiii. 56 (1943) and his *Ind. Raf.* 72 (1949) with correct bibliography as a "*Nomen validum*"; and its adoption in the *American Fern Journal* and by most recent students in America speaks for itself. Many botanists have regretted (and so stated) the frequent upsets in the names of our North American Ostrich-Fern, *Pteretis pensylvanica* (Willd.) Fern. in *RHODORA*, xlvii. 123 (1945). Now, "Malgré la synonymie chargée de cette fougère", M. Marcel Raymond, feeling that "on ne peut employer *Pteretis* Raf., parce que, comme COPELAND l'a démontré avec autorité . . . ce genre n'a jamais été publié conformément aux règles", has added to the synonymy another name: *Matteuc[c]ia pensylvanica* (Willd.) Raymond in *Naturaliste Canad.* lxxvii. 55 (1950). This combination, published under a misconception, will stand only if the perpetually tinkered "permanent" Rules are altered by the conservation of *Matteuccia*.

---

THE SEEMING INVALIDITY OF SOME SUBSTITUTES FOR THE NAME *HABENARIA STRAMINEA*.—In *RHODORA*, xxviii. 174 (1926) the species *Habenaria straminea* Fernald was first published, its type from calcareous barrens along the Straits of Belle Isle in northern Newfoundland, but the species also occurring in southern Greenland, Iceland and on the Faroe Islands, where it had been misidentified with the European *H. albida* (L.) R. Br. In 1929 Mr. Frank Morris, doubting the specific distinctness of our plant, called it *H. albida* (L.) R. Br., var. *straminea* (Fern.) F.



Fernald, Merritt Lyndon. 1950. "THE VALIDITY OF THE GENERIC NAME PTERETIS." *Rhodora* 52, 246–247.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/14523>

**Permalink:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/189133>

**Holding Institution**

Missouri Botanical Garden, Peter H. Raven Library

**Sponsored by**

Missouri Botanical Garden

**Copyright & Reuse**

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

Rights: <https://biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.