Case 2957

Phytobius Dejean, 1835 (Insecta, Coleoptera): proposed conservation

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is to conserve the weevil generic name Phytobius Dejean, 1835, in its current usage as placed on the Official List of Generic Names in Opinion 1529 (1989). It is threatened by the homonym Phytobius Schönherr, 1833 which was established with a different type species.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Coleoptera; Curculionidae; weevils; Phytobius; Phytobius quadrituberculatus.

1. In an application to the Commission published in 1980 (Silfverberg, 1980, p. 254), I proposed, amongst other actions, that the following entry be placed on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology: ‘Phytobius Dejean, 1835 (gender: masculine), type species by subsequent designation by Thomson, 1859, Curculio quadrituberculatus Fabricius, 1787’. This was done in Opinion 1529 (March 1989, p. 71).

2. At the time of my application I was unaware that Schönherr had established the name Phytobius in 1833 (p. 20), two years earlier than Dejean’s 1835 work. This was pointed out by O’Brien & Wibmer (1984, p. 296), who considered that Schönherr had introduced Phytobius as a replacement name for his genus Hydaticus, which was preoccupied. The background is that Schönherr (1825, p. 583) introduced the name Hydaticus with Rhynchaenus myriophylli Gyllenhal, 1813 as type species. This nominal species is listed by Dalla Torre & Mustache (1930) as a junior synonym of Curculio leucogaster Marsham, 1802, which is the type species of Litodactylus Redtenbacher, 1845. Hydaticus Schönherr is a junior homonym of Hydaticus Leach, 1817 (Coleoptera, Dytiscidae). When Schönherr (1833) established the name Phytobius he attributed it to Schmidt and gave his earlier name Hydaticus as a synonym; he included only one species, Rhynchaenus velutus Beck, 1817, which he gave as the type species of Phytobius. Rhynchaenus velutus is also the type species of Eubrychius Thomson, 1859 by original designation and monotypy. However, it is doubtful whether it was Schönherr’s intention to introduce a replacement name for Hydaticus, and in terms of the modern Code he did not do so: he attributed Phytobius to another person (Schmidt), he did not give a reason for replacing Hydaticus, and he designated a different type species.

3. Dejean (1835, p. 282) listed a number of species in Phytobius, as did Schönherr (1836, p. 458); they both included Curculio quadrituberculatus Fabricius, 1787 (p. 100). In 1859 Thomson (p. 138) designated C. quadrituberculatus as the type species of Phytobius, which has ever since been used in that sense (e.g. Arnett, 1960–1962; Colonnelli, 1980; Lucht, 1987; a further 12 references by 18 authors in the
last 40 years is held by the Commission Secretariat). Earlier, Schönherr (1825, col. 586) had designated *C. quadrituberculatus* as type species of his new genus *Rhinoncus*, but this usage was not followed, even by Schönherr himself, and in Opinion 1529 *Curculio pericarpia* Linnaeus, 1758 was accepted as the type species of *Rhinoncus*.

4. To maintain the current usage of *Phytobius* as placed on the Official List, and to maintain *C. quadrituberculatus* as the type species, it is necessary to suppress its use as a homonym by Schönherr (1833). This will also conserve the established usage of the names *Litodactylus* Redtenbacher, 1845 and *Eubrychius* Thomson, 1859.

5. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

(1) to use its plenary powers to suppress the name *Phytobius* Schönherr, 1833 and all uses of that name prior to the publication of *Phytobius* by Dejean, 1835 for the purposes of both the Principle of Priority and the Principle of Homonymy;

(2) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology the name *Phytobius* Schönherr, 1833, as suppressed in (1) above.

References


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