

ORTHODON VS MOSLA (LAMIACEAE)

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The generic name *Orthodon* Bentham & Oliver (Lamiaceae) has never gained widespread acceptance. *Mosla* (Bentham) Buchanan-Hamilton ex Maximowicz has been used almost universally for this Asian genus of about 22 species, several of them quite weedy. Indeed, Bentham himself (1876) adopted *Mosla* and cited his own generic name in synonymy, without comment.

The relevant data are these:

Orthodon R. Brown, Trans. Linn. Soc. London 12:578. 6 April–August 1819, Musci.

Orthodon Bentham & Oliver, J. Linn. Soc., Bot. 9:167. 12 October 1865, Lamiaceae.

Mosla (Bentham) Buchanan-Hamilton ex Maximowicz, Bull. Acad. Imp. Sci. Saint Pétersbourg, sér. 3, 20:456. 1875, based on *Hedeoma* Persoon sect. *Mosla* Bentham, Labiat. Gen. Spec. 366. 1834.

Orthodon Bentham & Oliver is an illegitimate homonym of *Orthodon* R. Brown, easily discoverable from *Index Nominum Genericorum (Plantarum)*. However, before plant taxonomy was blessed with such invaluable compilations, there was no practical and reliable way to discover the existence of duplicated generic names. This was what led Bau and Nayar (1969) to propose conservation of *Mosla* against *Orthodon* Bentham & Oliver; McVaugh (1970) replied (as Secretary for the Committee on Spermatophyta) that the existence of *Orthodon* R. Brown (Musci) made *Orthodon* Bentham & Oliver (Lamiaceae) a later homonym—the proposal was therefore superfluous, and was withdrawn by its authors.

There the matter rested. Since 1970, no proposal to conserve *Orthodon* Bentham & Oliver against *Orthodon* R. Brown has been submitted to Taxon, Dan Nicolson informs me (pers. comm., 4 December 1998). One expects none would arise, because *Mosla* is so widely used that to return to a conserved *Orthodon* would be destabilizing to nomenclature.

However, *Orthodon* Bentham & Oliver has now resurfaced: Gleason, H.A. and A. Cronquist (1991, p. 445) adopt it in place of *Mosla*. Its “impropriety” is not remarked upon in Hammond (1992).

The name cannot be used; I surmise (following the suggestion of Paul Fryxell) that its appearance may stem from the entry in Airy Shaw (1973), wherein

Orthodon is accepted in generic status and *Mosla* is reduced to synonymy, the compiler having been unaware of the existence of the priorable *Orthodon* R. Brown (Musci).

Mosla is represented in the United States of America only by the weedy annual *Mosla dianthera* (Roxburgh) Maximowicz, the type species of the genus; its known range is Georgia, Kentucky, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Tennessee (data from www.mip.berkeley.edu/bonap/checklist_intro.html), but it can be expected to spread much more widely. It would be most unfortunate if the illegitimate name *Orthodon dianthera* were to become weedy in the literature.

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