

Toponymy And Common Plant Names In Philological And Botanical Perspective

¹Patil D.A. and S.K.Tayade²

¹*Post-Graduate Department of Botany,
S.S.V.P.S's L.K. P.R.Ghogrey Science College,
Dhule-424005 (Maharashtra), India
(*Former Professor & Principal)

²Post Graduate Department of Botany,
P.S.P.V.PMandal's Arts, Science And Commerce College,
Shahada-425400, Dist. Nandurbar (M.S.) India.
(Corresponding Author)

Abstract:

Common or vernacular plant names are encoded with wisdom and experiences of ancient human societies. The present authors analysed English common names belonging 35 plant species, 29 genera and 23 families of angiosperms, except one being a gymnosperm. These have been have been simultaneously studied with their places of occurrence. Information on past common utilities with respect to sources of food, medicine, gardening or other miscellaneous necessities is unearthed during their critical scrutiny. Further ignorance of common names with respect to origin and development will obviously lead to depletion of the heritage and rich treasure trove of our ancients. The present authors, therefore, appealed for conscientious efforts to carry on investigation on this line for the sake of human welfare. Such investigations will certainly help in formulating the required management plan of the present flora.

Key Words:Plants, Common Names, Toponymy, Philology.

Introduction:

Common or vernacular plant names are ciphers of past and as such carry with them through ages various concepts, dogmas, beliefs, sentiments, observations, wisdom and experience of the then human societies. Thus they are traditional and christened over a long past. No legal body is responsible for their coinage. If decoded carefully, they reveal much information of the past still useful to the modern man.

Common names are always compared and contrasted with the scientific (botanical) names emphasizing characteristics. The former are not uniform and convey differently. They are thought variable within the same language, dialect, human community and any size of geographical areas. On the other hand, scientific names make high claims of uniformity in meaning and communication throughout the world. Moreover, they have legal sanctity as a set of rules of ICBN is followed. In such circumstances, why we should study common plant names? The answer and necessity both are substantially provided in this paper.

Methodology Adapted:

Common plant names in English indicative particularly of toponymic information are borrowed from literature (Bailey, 1949, 1963; Barnard *et al.*, 2003; Andrew, 1996; Geoffrey, 1973; Hereman, 1868). Their equivalent scientific names and respective family are searched out. Names of localities, places, continents, countries, cities, notable geographical areas, etc. are pointed out as interwoven in common names. Literature was also helpful to earmark their remarkable potentiality useful in the respective places of distribution. Economic significance, both traditional and classic, which particularly made difference in the respective distributional areas is provided indicating the plant species as has been emphasized in ancient past. Common plant names, toponymic data and their potentiality *vis-à-vis* economic utilities interwoven are brought in shaper focus.

Results And Discussion:

It is commonly understood that common or vernacular plant names often cause confusion and mislead. In support of this fact, several examples are cited. Few of these examples are: (i) corn is *Zea mays* L.. But it is also applied for wheat, rye or barley, (ii) Ginseng is used for different species of the genus *Panax*, (iii) Brahmi refers to *Centellaasiatica* (L.) Urban and *Bacopamannieri* (L.) Penn., (iv) Traveller's palm *viz.*, *Ravenaiamadagascriensis* J. F. Gmel. (Strelitziaceae) does not belong to the palms (Palmae), (v) white waterlily *Nymphaea alba* L. (Nymphaeaceae) does not belong to the lilies (Liliaceae) and have about 15 different English common names, (vi) SafedMusali *Dactylorhizahatagirea* (Don) Soo (Orchidaceae) (Syn. *Orchislatifolia*L.) now refers to different species of *Chlorophytum* and *Asparagus*. (viii) Vernacular name refers to different species of the genus *Valeriana* (Valerianaceae), but also to *Geumpervuvianum*Focke. (Rosaceae) and species of *Ranunculus* (Ranunculaceae). It is, therefore, scientific community reached to a conclusion that scientific names (botanical names) should be employed for uniform, unambiguous and international communication. At the same, we should not ignore ease of common names for understanding in certain geographical areas, countries, states, languages, dialects or human societies. Users of common names are very familiar with them. It is also improper to advise layman to memorize and use scientific names. It appears even impracticable. The disadvantages of using common names appear to be overemphasized by the scientific community. This trend in past has culminated into the ignorance of exhuming common plant names.

Individuals of certain human communities are often the pioneers in identification and recognition of organisms, whether plants are animals. It is now a common practice to utilize the services of indigenous people who guide the scientific community in some scientific expeditions. They provide unique clues which lead the members of scientific community to proper taxa. In such circumstance, this activity of reaching to organisms or species is reliable. Even information adduced from common or vernacular names being used in ethnotaxonomy (Patil, 2005, 2010). This is as it should be. A more proper step in the study is common

names is undertaken by developing dictionaries of common plant names (Barnard *et al.*, 2003; Hereman, 1868; Geoffrey, 1975). It is also worth to note that origins of common names are being searched out (*cf.* Patil, 1958, 2000, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2010, 2015; Patil and Patil, 2000, 2002; Patil *et al.*, 2013, 2016; Pawar and Patil, 1999; Dhale and Patil, 2013; Patil and Jaiswal, 2013; Patil and Shisode, 2014; Patil and Tayade, 2014). All these as they should be.

The present study included 35 species belonging to 29 genera and 23 families. Of these, only one species *viz.*, *Arthrotaxis cupressoides* D. Don (Cupressaceae) is a gymnosperm, all other are angiospermic taxa. Their common names have been analysed in view of toponymy and various aspects of plant science. As far as toponymic concern, continent like Africa; countries e.g. Germany, India, Italy, Vietnam, Turkey, Tasmania, Jamaica, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Siberia, Syria, Taiwan; cities *viz.*, London, Sydney, Mountain Himalaya and Madagascar islands have been incorporated while coining common names. Alongwith these places, certain commonly employed plant utilities are combined with them e.g. (i) fruits (cherry, data plum, mulberry, fig, orange, nut, apricot, olive), (ii) vegetables and salad (spinach, coriander), (iii) spices (garlic, pepper, sorrel), (iv) rubber, (vii) fibres (flax, hemp), (viii) resin, (ix) gum, (x) varnish, (xi) symbolism and (xii) house plant. These utilities brought prominence to the respective plant species and made them more popular. A variety of plant products or plant sources known in particular geographical places have been reflected. The common names informed on aspects of human life for his benefit including ornamental or gardening. Nearly all compartments of human life are considered while coining common plant names.

The above resume indicates how common names are locally useful. Even they have imbibed information at the level of a continent or countries. They covered larger masses of human population and almost their everyday concern. The study of common names thus bring the wisdom of our ancients which is still beneficial to modern societies. It is, therefore, the present authors appeal that the use of common names and their origin should be unearthed for the welfare of mankind. Although tall claims can not made for common names, our ancients have very wisely coined the plant names hand-in-hand the places of occurrence of plant species. Phytogeography and utilities can be revealed through careful scrutiny of common names on philological ground.

Acknowledgements:

We are thankful to the authorities S.S.V.P.Sanstha for library facilities and inspirations.

References:

- [1] Andrew, C.M. (1996) The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants. Dorling Kindersley, London, UK.
- [2] Bailey, L.H. (1963) The Standard Encyclopedia of Horticulture. Vol.I-III. The MacMillan Co., New York, USA.

- [3] Bailey, L.M. (1949) Manual of Cultivated Plants. The MacMillan Co., New York, USA.
- [4] Barnard Loretta, Doggett Dannielle, Doig Fiona and Kate Etherington (2003) Flora: Dictionary of Common Plant Names. Firefly Books Ltd. Toronto, Canada.
- [5] Dhale, D.A. and D.A.Patil (2013) Vernacular Plant Names in Maharashtra (India): In Ethnobiological Perspective. *IJESPR* 4(1):16-19.
- [6] Geoffrey Grigson (1973) A Dictionary of English Plant Names. Allen Lane, London, UK.
- [7] Hereman Samuel (1868) Paxton's Botanical Dictionary. Bradbury, Evans & Co. Bouverie Street, E.C. (Rev.Ed.1980 By Periodical Experts Book Agency, Delhi, India).
- [8] Patil D.A. (1998) Vernacular plant names : Their origin and utility in Dhule District (Maharashtra). *Ethnobotany* 10:130-132.
- [9] Patil D.A. (2000) Sanskrit plant names in an ethnobotanical perspective. *Ethnobotany* 12:60-64.
- [10] Patil, D.A. (2005) Philology vis-à-vis elements of plant nomenclature in Sanskrit. *Adv.Biol.Sci.* 5(1):49-51.
- [11] Patil, D.A. (2006) English names of common plants. *J. SwamyBot.Cl.* 23:135-138.
- [12] Patil, D.A. (2009) Significance of vernacular plant names vis-à-vis their origins in Buldhana District (Maharashtra). *Ethnobotany*. 21 (1-2) 91-94.
- [13] Patil, D.A. (2015) Study of common names of plants in ethnomedicinal and historical perspectives. *Species* 12(32):14-16.
- [14] Patil, M.V and D.A. Patil (2000) Bases and utility of vernacular plant names in Nasik District (Maharashtra). *J.Swamy Bot.Cl.* 17(3-4):83-85.
- [15] Patil, D.A. and A.G.Jaiswal (2013) Philological investigation in Bhili common plant names from Nandurbar district (Maharashtra, India). *Life Sciences Leaflets* 7:47-53.
- [16] Patil, D.A. and M.V.Patil (2002) Sanskrit plant names in an ethnobotanical perspective: II. *Ethnobotany* 14:87-92.
- [17] Patil, D.A. and S.B.Shisode (2014) Significance of common plant names in philological and ethnobiological perspective. *The Journal of Ethnobiology & Traditional Medicine* (Photon) 122: 854-859.
- [18] Patil, D.A. and S.K.Tayade (2014) Sanskrit common plant names In philological and ethnobotanical context. *The Journal of Biodiversity* (Photon), 113:268-271.

- [19] Patil, C. R., Patil, N.P. and Patil, D.A. (2013) Origin and Significance of Vernacular Plants Names in Maharashtra. Biodiversity and Environmental Crisis: Past, Present & Future-2013 (Ed.Patilet.al.) ISBN: 978-93-82414-44-5 pp.94-98.
- [20] Patil, P.S., Patil, M.V. and D.A.Patil (2016) Toponymy in Badwani District of Madhya Pradesh (India). *IRMJCR* (Scholars World) Special Issue VI (January, 2016) : 131-134.
- [21] PawarShubhangi and Patil, D.A. (2012) Toponymy of villages and towns in Jalgaon district of Maharashtra (India) in botanical perspective. *Multilogic in Science* 1(1):87-91.
- [22] PawarSubhangi and D.A. Patil (1999) The origin and utility of vernacular plant names in Khandesh region of Maharashtra. *J.SwamyBot.C117*:43-47.
- [23] Pawar, Shubhangi and Patil, D.A. (2013)Toponymy of Villages and Towns In Dhule And Nandurbar Districts of (Maharashtra) India. In Botanical perspective, Biodiversity and Environmental Crisis: Past, Present & Future-2013 (Ed.Patil D.A. et.al.) pp.110-117.
- [24] Tayade, S.K. and Patil, D.A. (2012) Toponymy of villages and towns in Nasik district of Maharashtra (India) in botanical perspective. *Life Sciences Leaflets* 9:13-23.
- [25] Tayade, S.K. and Patil, D.A. (2012) Toponymic study in Buldhana district of Maharashtra in botanical perspective. *Life Sciences Leaflets* 9:1-12.

Table-I: Toponymy, English Common Plant Names and Utilities

Sr.No. 1	Plant Common Name 2	Basis of Toponymy 3	Botanical Name & Family 4	Potential Significance 5
1.	German Garlic	Germany (Country)	<i>Allium senescens</i> L. Liliaceae	Grown as an ornamental, a winner of 'Award of Garden Merit' of Royal Horticultural Society.
2.	German Primrose	Germany (Country)	<i>Primula obconica</i> Hance (Primulaceae)	Grown as a houseplant, won 'Award of Garden Merit'.
3.	Himalayan Cherry	Himalaya (Mountain)	<i>Prunus rufa</i> Wall. ex Hook. f. Rosaceae	Primarily grown for its attractive ornamental peeling dark, polished, purplish bark.
4.	Himalayan Birch	Himalaya (Mountain)	<i>Betula utilis</i> D. Don Betulaceae	Once its bark was used as paper for writing, now used for umbrella, roofs to write sacred mantras (hymns), etc.
5.	Indian Bowstring Hemp	India (Country)	<i>Sansevieria roxburghiana</i> Schult. & Schultf. Agavaceae	Fibres used traditionally for bowstring, planted also as an ornamental.
6.	Italian Millet	Italy (Country)	<i>Setaria italic</i> (L.) P. Beauv. Poaceae (Graminae)	An earliest and widely cultivated food crop.
7.	Jamaica Pepper	Jamaica (Country)	<i>Pimenta dioica</i> (L.) Merr. Myrtaceae	Because of distinctive aroma and flavor, used in several recipes in Jamaica and elsewhere.
8.	Jamaica Sorrel	Jamaica (Country)	<i>Hibiscus sabdariffa</i> L. Malvaceae	Calyces being sour, used in various recipes, beverages, and juices.
9.	Japanese Bynching Onion	Japan (Country)	<i>Allium fistulosum</i> L. Liliaceae	An important ingredient in Asian particularly in Japan cuisine.
10.	Japanese Date Plum	Japan (Country)	<i>Diospyros kaki</i> L. f. Ebenaceae	Widely oldest cultivated for nutritious fruits.

Sr.No. 1	Plant Common Name 2	Basis of Toponymy 3	Botanical Name & Family 4	Potential Significance 5
11.	Japanese Millet	Japan (Country)	<i>Echinochloa aesculenta</i> (A.Braun) H.Scholz Poaceae (Graminae)	Cultivated for human food and animal feed.
12.	Japanese Pepper	Japan (Country)	<i>Zanthoxylum piperitum</i> (L.) DC. Rutaceae	Pulverized aromatic fruits used as spice in various recipes and soups.
13.	Japanese Varnish Tree	Japan (Country)	<i>Firmiana simplex</i> (L.) W.F.Wight Sterculiaceae	Grown as handsome ornamental tree, fruits release brownish varnish-like fluid.
14.	Korean Mulberry	Korea (Country)	<i>Morus australis</i> Poir. Moraceae	Fruits edible, bark fibres used for making paper, medicinally important.
15.	Korean Raspberry	Korea (Country)	<i>Rubus crataegifolius</i> Bunge Rosaceae	Fruits having a sweet agreeable flavor, consumed raw or cooked.
16.	London Pride	London (City)	<i>Saxifras auribium</i> D.A.Webb Saxifragaceae	Symbolic of resilience of London and ordinary Landoners.
17.	Madagascar Rubber Vine	Madagascar (Island)	<i>Cryptostegia madagascariensis</i> Bajer ex Decne. Asclepiadaceae	Latex as a local source of rubber but not commercially, grown as an ornamental vine.
18.	Malabar Spinach	Malabar (Indian Region)	<i>Basella alba</i> L. (Syn. <i>B. rubra</i> L.) Basellaceae	Leaves used vegetable in Indian cuisine.
19.	Mexican Ground Cherry	Mexico (City/State)	<i>Physalia ixocarpa</i> Brot. Solanaceae	Fruit necessary ingredient of most Mexican culinary preparation.
20.	Natal Fig.	Natal (African Region)	<i>Ficus natalensis</i> Hocht. Moraceae	Bark harvested to make barkcloth and incorporate this fabric into modern uses.
21.	Natal Orange	Natal (African Region)	<i>Strychnos spinosa</i> Lam. Loganiaceae	Fruits sweet-sour, yellow with yellow edible flesh.

Sr.No. 1	Plant Common Name 2	Basis of Toponymy 3	Botanical Name & Family 4	Potential Significance 5
22.	New Zealand Flax Or New Zealand Hemp	New Zealand (Country)	<i>Phormium tenax</i> J.R.Forst& G. Forst. Agavaceae	Fibres used for durable clothing, ropes, mats, baskets, wall hangings, etc.
23.	Queensland Nut	Queensland (Australia)	<i>Macadamia tetraphylla</i> L.A.S. Johnson Proteaceae	Kernels consumed mainly as a snack food, useful also in baked goods and confectionery.
24.	Siberian Apricot	Siberia (Country)	<i>Prunus sibirica</i> L. Rosaceae	Edible oil from seeds used as an almond flavouring.
25.	Siberian Ginseng	Siberia (Country)	<i>Eleutherococcus senticosus</i> (Rupr. & Maxim.) Maxim. Araliaceae	Roots increase athletic performance and ability to work, used as tonic (during times of stress and pressure, restores vigour, improves memory and increase longevity.
26.	Siberian Millet	Siberia (Country)	<i>Echinochloa frumentacea</i> Link. Poaceae (Graminae)	Cultivated as cereal in Indian region, used as staple food or consumed during religious fasting.
27.	Sydney Blue Gum	Sydney (City in Australia)	<i>Eucalyptus saligna</i> Sm. Myrtaceae	Timber used for building construction, boat building, prized for flooring and furniture.
28.	Syrian Mountain Cherry	Syria (Mountain Region in Syria)	<i>Prunus prostrata</i> Labill. Rosaceae	Fruit edible but not preferred, mainly used for ornamental gardening.
29.	Taiwan Cherry	Taiwan (Country)	<i>Prunus campanulata</i> Maxim. Rosaceae	Popular ornamental tree for private and public gardens.
30.	Tasmanian Pencil Pine	Tasmania (Country)	<i>Athrotaxis cupressoides</i> D.Don Cupressaceae	Only occasionally grown as ornamental (not useful for pencil making, because of shape called so).

Sr.No. 1	Plant Common Name 2	Basis of Toponymy 3	Botanical Name & Family 4	Potential Significance 5
31.	Texas Ebony	Texas (American State)	<i>Pithecellobium flexicaule</i> (Benth.) J.M. Coult. Mimosaceae	Popular ornamental tree with dense foliage and fragrant flowers.
32.	Texas Olive	Texas (American State)	<i>Cordia boissieri</i> A.DC. Boraginaceae	Fruits used for jelly; fruit syrup used to dye cloth, wood useful for carpentry.
33.	Turkish Liquidambar	Turkey (Country)	<i>Liquidambar orientalis</i> L. Altingiaceae	Resin useful for chewing gum and as stabilizer for cakes, resin also used to flavor baked foods.
34.	Vietnamese Coriander	Vietnam (Country)	<i>Persicaria odorata</i> (Lour.) Sojak Polygonaceae	Commonly consumed fresh as salad, used also in soups, stews, etc.
35.	Turkey Rhubarb	Turkey (Country)	<i>Rheum palmatum</i> L. Polygonaceae	Known for renowned medicinal virtues.