

# Systematic Botany. Lecture 2

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August 30, 2013



# Outline

Slides from International Botanical Congress



# *Haptanthus hazlettii*, enigmatic central American plant, in the light of new findings

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July 27th, 2011

# Outline

Introduction

Recollection

Investigation

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Introduction

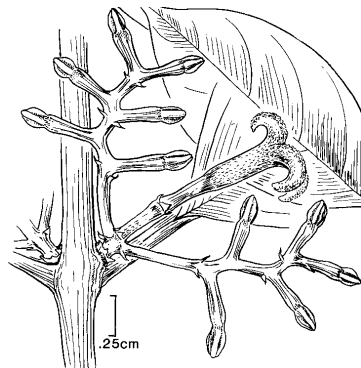
Recollection

Investigation

## *Haptanthus hazlettii*

- ▶ One of the most rare plants in the world
- ▶ Discovered in herbarium collections made in 1980 in North Honduras
- ▶ Has unique and unusual reproductive structures which is hard to interpret
- ▶ Did not appear to be a member of any described family of angiosperms

## Peculiar flower morphology



Female organs (pistils with 3 carpels?) are surrounded by branched clusters of male organs (stamens??). In all, reproductive structures superficially resemble R. Melville's (1963, 1968) diagrams of flower evolution.



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L-636

ISOTYPE

*Myrsine laslettii* Baker  
Kew & Naudin  
Jed. Calcutta 1899. C. Wright

1897 HONDURAS

Found on a light soil on a steep slope,  
surrounding forested area, common  
philippine area forest.  
1 tree, 10 ft. of diameter  
10 ft. diameter  
10 ft. diameter

July 25, 1941. T. H. Sprent  
T. H. Sprent & Co.  
Atlix, Jalisco (Bogachoff)

B. Sprent & Co. B. Sprent & Co.  
Atlix, Jalisco. B. Sprent & Co.

© H. Sprent  
H. Sprent & Co. 1941

- ▶ One herbarium sheet is kept in Missouri Botanical Garden, the second—in Lancetilla Botanical Garden (Tela, Honduras)
- ▶ All attempts to extract DNA (and even proteins) failed

# In search of relationships

- ▶ Basal eudicots? (perhaps, Buxaceae)—Doust & Stevens, 2005
- ▶ Salicaceae—Euphorbiaceae? (Malpighiales)—Goldberg & Alden, 2005

Dicotyledonous Family of Incertae Position

## Dicotyledonous Family of Incertae Position

### 1. *HAPTANTHACEAE*

C. Nelson 2002. (Isonym: Haptanthaceae Shipunov in Zhurn. Obshchei Biol. 64: 504, 2003, validated by a diagnosis in Latin). 1/1. Honduras (from 5 km south-east of Mataras, Alantida).

Evergreen glabrous tree. Vessels with scalariform perforations or scalariform and reticulate; scalariform

- ▶ Armen Takhtajan (2009) regarded *Haptanthus* as an only unplaced, *incertae sedis* family among angiosperms.

## Northern Honduras, Atlantida



In the Northern Honduras, most of the forests, especially on the plains, are now cut

## Search strategy



The main strategy was to search along borders of tree cuts/pastures/plantations. Most of flowering small trees are concentrated there

## Finding



Finally, from the top of the hill ( $\approx 400$  m altitude) we saw with binoculars unusual small tree, and that was *Haptanthus*!

## *Haptanthus* is alive!

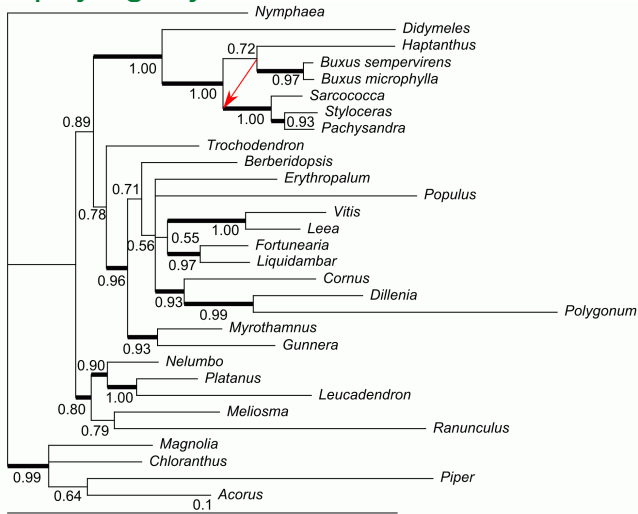


## Conservation



We found only one tree, but mared the point with GPS so two months later almost twenty trees have been found, and the one branch has been rooted and planted in Lancetilla Botanical Garden

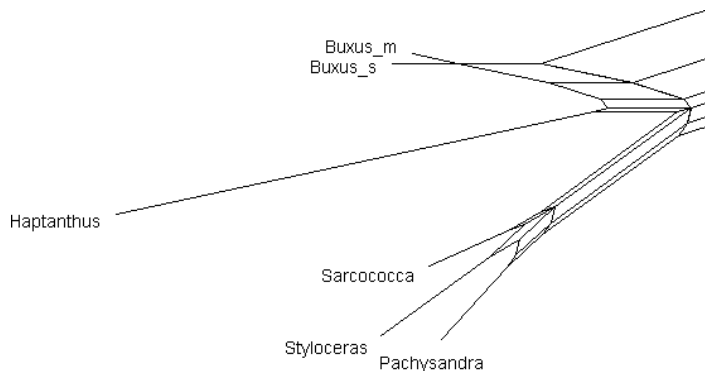
# Molecular phylogeny: 100% Buxaceae



[From Shipunov &amp; Shipunova, 2011]



## Within a family, position is unstable



- ▶ Either *Buxus* branch, or *Sarcococca*–*Styloceras*–*Pachysandra* branch
- ▶ More markers are needed

## Wood



- ▶ Vessel lumina narrow ( $< 50 \mu\text{m}$ ), mostly solitary
- ▶ Axial parenchyma diffuse-in-aggregates
- ▶ Fibre walls with distinctly bordered pits
- ▶ Exclusively scalariform perforation plates with numerous (18–62) bars
- ▶ Multiseriate rays with long uniseriate wings composed of upright cells (Kribs' Heterogeneous Type I)

## Wood structure



## Wood structure: comparison

	Av. length of vessel elements ( $\mu\text{m}$ )	Av. length of fibres ( $\mu\text{m}$ )	Av. bar number per perforation plate	Type of axial parenchyma	Kribs' type of ray parenchyma
<i>Buxus</i>	351-688	457-915	8,0-17,5	Diffuse-in- aggregates, diffuse	Heterogeneous IIA
<i>Nothobuxus</i>	440-540	580-905	5,8-9,9	Scanty paratracheal	Heterogeneous IIA
<i>Sarcococca</i>	970-1125	1098-1267	45,3-55,3	Diffuse	Heterogeneous IIA
<i>Styloceras</i>	1150-1570	1298-1772	10,1-45,2	Diffuse	Heterogeneous I
<i>Haptanthus</i>	1463	1796	36	Diffuse-in- aggregates	Heterogeneous I

[Comparison with Sh. Carlquist (1982) data on the genera of Buxaceae]

*Haptanthus* is similar to *Styloceras* and *Sarcococca* (with lesser degree)

## Flower morphology: *Haptanthus* vs. other Buxaceae

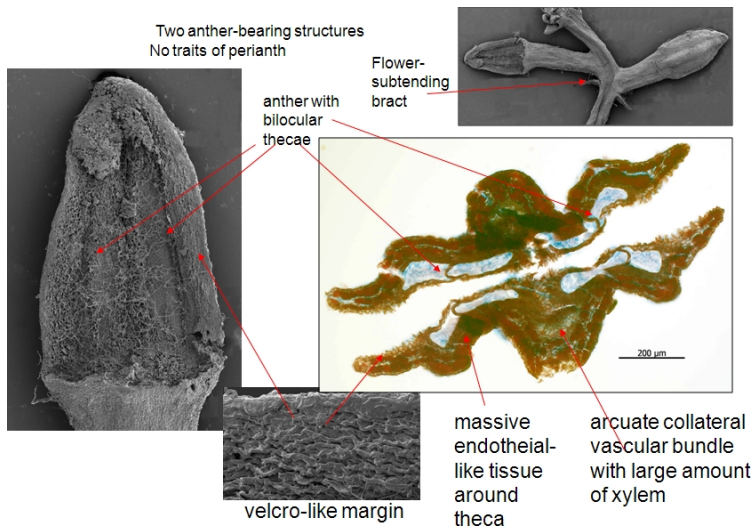
### *Pro:*

- ▶ Flowers unisexual: all Buxaceae
- ▶ Inflorescence with terminal female flower and lateral male racemes: *Buxus*, *Notobuxus*, *Styloceras kunthianum*
- ▶ Male flower without prominent tepals and pistilode: *Styloceras*
- ▶ Male flowers with two stamens: 4 stamens in most Buxaceae, but variable stamen number (3–45) in *Styloceras*
- ▶ Tricarpelate female flowers: *Buxus* and others

### *Contra:*

- ▶ Morphological nature of staminate flower in *Haptanthus* is obscure
- ▶ Gynoecium is distinctive: parietal placentation and 8–15 ovules per carpel vs. axile placentation and 2 ovules per carpel in other Buxaceae

## Male flower: features



## Male flower: hypotheses

### I. *Flattened filaments with introrse anthers:*

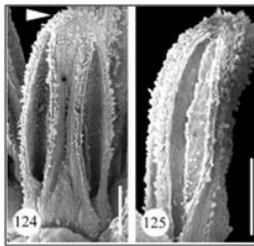
- ▶ BUT: arcuate collateral vascular bundles with large amount of xylem are not common in stamen filaments
- ▶ BUT: no remnants of a perianth

### II. *Perianth members with adnate stamens:*

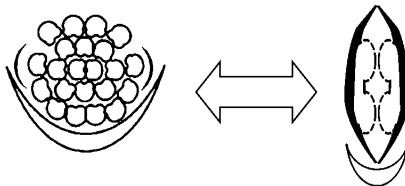
- ▶ BUT: single conductive bundle is not typical for perianth members
- ▶ Male flower of *Styloceras* (Buxaceae) could be a tentative key:
  - ▶ Variable number of stamens (3–45)
  - ▶ Occurrence of paired bractlike phylomes (tepals) with single vascular bundles in lateral position
  - ▶ Flattened filaments with basifix anthers
  - ▶ Large amount of endothecium-like tissue in connectives

[Following M. von Balthazar and P. Endress (2002a, b) data]

# *Styloceras* vs. *Haptanthus*



[Photo from M. von Balthazar and P. Endress (2002a, b)]

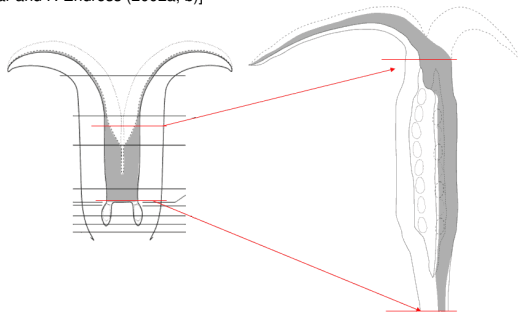




The diagram illustrates the process of postgenital fusion in a developing embryo. It shows a cross-section of the embryo with the neural tube (dashed line) and the body wall (solid line). The neural tube is shown fusing with the body wall, with arrows indicating the direction of fusion. The resulting structure is labeled "postgenital fusion".

- ▶ Parietal placentation
- ▶ 8–15 ovules per carpel
- ▶ No synascidiate zone (only symplicate zone)
- ▶ Two rows of ovules in each carpel (cf. with two ovules per carpel in other Buxaceae)
- ▶ Vascular anatomy is also similar to other Buxaceae

[Picture of *Sarcococca*  
from M. von Balthazar and P. Endress (2002a, b)]



- ▶ *Sarcococca* has the most prominent symplicate zone (but two carpels only)
- ▶ Parietal placentation is maybe a result of *symplicate zone elongation*—a possible way to increase the seed number per fruit, similar to Pittosporaceae (with parietal placentation) vs. other Apiales (with axile placentation)

## Simple lessons from *Haptanthus* story

- ▶ Sometimes, they come back
- ▶ One man **is** a man
- ▶ We already knew

# Acknowledgements

- ▶ Ekaterina Shipunova
- ▶ Don Hazlett
- ▶ Peter Stevens
- ▶ Cyril Nelson
- ▶ Alexey Yakovlev
- ▶ Vitalij Dinets
- ▶ Ciro Navarro
- ▶ Wendy Cerrato
- ▶ Luis Bejarano
- ▶ David Patterson
- ▶ Hilary Morrison
- ▶ Sheri Simmons
- ▶ Meghan Chafee

