
Floristic studies in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam

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Résumé

Progress on taxonomic research in tropical Asia depends on good collections, adequate facilities to house and study herbarium collections, access to literature, types and specimens, trained taxonomists, political will, and the means to disseminate the results of research. The balance between these elements can determine the success of Flora projects. FCLV will be compared to Flora projects in other parts of Southeast Asia and recommendations presented. The need for coordinated taxonomic research across tropical Asia will be emphasised. Plant collection densities in the region will be compared and the impact of differing collection densities on our knowledge of plant diversity in CLV will be discussed. Low collection densities inevitably lead to many species being overlooked, although this will disproportionately affect plant families higher in narrowly endemic species. Case studies in Apocynaceae and Gesneriaceae, comparing CLV to Thailand, demonstrate the effect that targeted collecting and intensive study can have on our knowledge of regional plant biodiversity. The Apocynaceae, with relatively few narrowly endemic species, shows similar patterns of diversity in CLV and Thailand, with only few species expected to be found in CLV not yet known from there despite the lower collection densities. Conversely, the number of known species of Gesneriaceae from Thailand is much greater than in CLV. Much of the diversity known from Thailand has only been uncovered through intensive collecting and study in recent years. In Thailand many species are narrowly endemic and, therefore, targeted collecting and increasing collection density rates for the country have increased the number of species known by more than 50% in 10 years. As many genera of Gesneriaceae are shared between Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam there is reason to assume similar patterns would emerge with more intensive collecting and study in CLV.

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