

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES  
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Twenty-seventh meeting of the Plants Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 8 – 13 July 2024

Appendices of the Convention

Nomenclature matters

Botanical nomenclature

NOMENCLATURE FOR APPENDIX II-LISTED ORCHIDS (ORCHIDACEAE SPP.)

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat, in close collaboration with the nomenclature specialist of the Plants Committee.
2. At its 19th meeting (CoP19; Panama City, 2022), the Conference of the parties adopted Decisions 19.285 and 19.286 on *Nomenclature for Appendix-II listed orchids (Orchidaceae spp.)*:

***Directed to the Secretariat***

**19.285** *The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *seek feedback from Parties and relevant experts on their experience in using the standard nomenclatural reference for Appendix-II listed orchids, in Resolution Conf. 12.11 (Rev. CoP19) on Standard nomenclature, including suggestions to improve the standard nomenclature in light of relevant updates in orchid taxonomy;*
- b) *subject to the availability of external resources, and in close collaboration with the nomenclature specialist of the Plants Committee, commission the drafting of an update of the standard nomenclature references for Appendix II-listed orchids, taking into account feedback received under paragraph a) of this Decision; and*
- c) *report to the Plants Committee the feedback received for review.*

***Directed to the Plants Committee***

**19.286** *The Plants Committee shall review any report from the Secretariat related to the implementation of Decision 19.285 and, as appropriate, make recommendations to the Conference of the Parties.*

3. On 9 January 2024, the Secretariat published [Notification to the Parties No. 2024/010](#) to invite Parties and experts to submit information on their experience of using the standard nomenclatural reference for Appendix-II listed orchids in Resolution Conf. 12.11 (Rev. CoP19) on *Standard nomenclature*, including suggestions to improve the standard nomenclature in light of relevant updates in orchid taxonomy.
4. The Secretariat received responses from Germany, Mexico, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, and the United States of America. The responses are included in Annexes 1 to 8 to the present document and summarized below:
  - a) Germany compared the nomenclatural standard reference adopted at CoP19 with the Plants of the World Online (POWO) database (dataset from 27.10.2023). It compiled extensive lists of editorial

observations (Annex 1), differences between these references (Annex 2), and misspelled names in the current standard nomenclature reference (Annex 3).

- b) Mexico submitted a number of observations and corrections with regard to Appendix-II listed orchid species that occur in Mexico (Annex 4).
  - c) Sweden considered that the current standard nomenclature reference is in line with the databases Sweden uses for the taxa concerned (Annex 5), but that it might be better if the reference refers directly to Plants of the World Online database and download dates so that it is a live checklist that is updated with taxonomic changes.
  - d) Switzerland pointed out that the current standard nomenclature reference is a helpful tool and regularly used by Switzerland to verify names and synonyms (Annex 6).
  - e) Thailand shared three nomenclatural observations of general nature that highlight the challenges associated with unstable taxonomic classification for traders and custom officials (Annex 7).
  - f) The United States of America considered the available nomenclature reference as convenient and easy to use, but in some respects out of date with regard to Kew's Plants of the World Online database. The USA therefore suggested a time-stamped download from the World Checklist of Vascular Plants (Annex 8) because it is updated daily and is the taxonomic backbone of the Plants of the World Online database (most commonly used plant species database).
5. Taking into consideration the responses received, the Secretariat has identified three possible ways forward with regards to the future of the standard nomenclature reference for Appendix II-listed orchids:
- a) retain the current nomenclature reference as included in [Resolution Conf. 12.11 \(Rev. CoP19\)](#), as some Parties consider it a useful reference, and noting that it has been adopted recently at CoP19;
  - b) revise the current nomenclature reference, as some Parties propose various concise amendments. The Secretariat notes that external funding to carry out an update as per Decision 19.285 paragraph b) has been secured thanks to the financial contribution of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; or
  - c) prepare a replacement to the current nomenclature reference, as some Parties consider that a time-stamped extract of the Plants of the World Database (POWO) would be more convenient and more easily kept up-to date with the latest changes in taxonomy, noting that each future update of the references included in [Resolution Conf. 12.11 \(Rev. CoP19\)](#) would not be automatic and would still require time-stamped extracts and adoption by the Conference of the Parties.
6. The Secretariat believes that full and complete equivalence of standard nomenclature references with continuously updated databases, such as the POWO could present challenges in the CITES context. The Secretariat is therefore of the view that the second option would allow for the production of a comprehensive update of the current standard nomenclature reference for the consideration by CoP21, in accordance with the process outlined in Resolution Conf. 12.11 (Rev. CoP19) on *Standard nomenclature*. The delay until CoP21 is proposed on the basis of the following considerations:
- a) the Orchidaceae family comprises around 30,000 species;
  - b) taxonomic nomenclature for this large family is expected to remain fluid and quickly evolving;
  - c) CITES nomenclature requires a certain degree of stability and any updates to standard nomenclature references will always require adoption by the Conference of the Parties;
  - d) the current standard nomenclature reference was adopted recently at CoP19; and
  - e) any update, even through time-stamped extracts, will always require substantial time investment and preparatory work by the Secretariat and Committees.
7. Should the Plants Committee agree that this is the preferred way forward, the Secretariat has prepared a set of draft decisions for its implementation between CoP20 and CoP21, as follows:

**Directed to the Secretariat, in close cooperation with the nomenclature specialist of the Plants Committee**

**20.AA** The Secretariat shall, in close cooperation with the nomenclature specialist of the Plants Committee:

- a) subject to the continued availability of external resources, prepare an update to the standard nomenclatural reference for Appendix-II listed orchids contained in Resolution Conf. 12.11 (Rev. CoP19) on *Standard nomenclature*;
- b) in undertaking the above, take into account the views expressed in response to Notification 2024/010 and compiled in document PC27 Doc. 41.3 on *Nomenclature for Appendix-II listed orchids (Orchidaceae spp.)*, as well as an updated comparison of the current standard nomenclature reference with the *Plants of the World Online (POWO)* database; and
- c) report on progress or results of this work to the Plants Committee

**Directed to the Plants Committee**

**20.BB** The Plants Committee shall:

- a) consider progress and results reported by the Secretariat as per Decision 20.AA; and
- b) make recommendations to the Conference of the Parties, as appropriate.

Recommendations:

8. The Plants Committee is invited to:

- a) review the responses contained in Annexes 1 to 8 to the present document;
- b) consider the options outlined in paragraph 5 of the present document and the proposed way forward in paragraph 6 of the present document;
- c) consider and agree to submit to the Conference of the Parties the draft decisions in paragraph 7 of the present document;
- d) if appropriate, agree that Decisions 19.285 and 19.286 have been implemented and can be proposed for deletion at the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties; and
- e) report its recommendations to the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.