

A new replacement name, *Eugenia Santhoshii* Kottaim., Y. Mahesh & Lytan (Myrtaceae), for the illegitimate *Eugenia Malabarica* Sivu, Neethu & Ratheesh

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Abstract

A new name, *Eugenia santhoshii* Kottaim., Y. Mahesh & Lytan, is proposed here to replace the illegitimate name *Eugenia malabarica* Sivu, Neethu & Ratheesh, which is a later homonym of *Eugenia malabarica* Bedd.

Keywords: *Eugenia*, endemic, icn, western ghats

Introduction

Eugenia P. Micheli ex L. is a taxonomically complex and ecologically important genus of trees or shrubs with a pantropical distribution (Schmid 1972; Govaerts *et al.*, 2008; Sbaïs *et al.*, 2022; Gala *et al.*, 2023; Valdemarin *et al.*, 2026) [5, 6, 24, 25, 34]. It is the second largest genus of tree species after *Syzygium* (Beech *et al.*, 2017) [4], both of which belong to the family Myrtaceae. *Eugenia* currently comprises approximately 1,245 accepted species (POWO 2026) [20]. Despite its pantropical distribution, the genus is predominantly Neotropical (Lucas *et al.*, 2011) [13], with its principal centre of diversity in the tropical forests of South America, particularly the Brazilian Atlantic Forest and adjacent regions (Wilson 2011; Mazine *et al.*, 2016, 2024; Amorim *et al.*, 2026) [2, 17, 18, 35].

The taxonomic delimitation of *Eugenia* has been a time-consuming endeavour (Akansha *et al.*, 2026) [1]. Early classifications frequently confused *Eugenia* with *Syzygium*, despite the two genera belonging to different tribes (Myrteae and Syzygieae, respectively), underscoring the longstanding challenges in defining generic boundaries within Myrtaceae. *Eugenia* can be distinguished from other genera within the tribe Myrteae DC. by its predominantly 4-merous flowers, free and separate calyx lobes in the floral bud, and a hypanthium that is generally neither prolonged nor tubular beyond the summit of the bilocular, multiovulate ovary (Landrum & Kawasaki 1997; Snow 2011; Mazine *et al.*, 2014; Kawasaki *et al.*, 2019) [10, 12, 16, 32]. The genus is further characterized by an embryo with cotyledons fused into a solid, homogeneous mass (Kawasaki 1989; Holst *et al.*, 2003) [7, 9]. *Eugenia* can also be readily distinguished from *Syzygium* by a combination of vegetative and reproductive characters. In *Eugenia*, the young shoots and flowers are often pubescent, the flowers are usually solitary or arranged in many-flowered axillary dichasial or raceme-like inflorescences, and the seeds possess fused cotyledons. In contrast, *Syzygium* typically has glabrous young shoots and flowers, inflorescences that are usually terminal (occasionally ramiflorous or cauliflorous) or paniculate, and seeds with free cotyledons (Shareef & Kumar 2020) [28].

Rathakrishnan (2021) [21] reported 18 species and 2 varieties from India, whereas Shareef & Kumar (2020) [28] recognized 27 taxa, comprising 25 species, one subspecies and one

variety. Based on our critical assessment of the available literature, 27 taxa (26 species and one variety) are currently known from Kerala (Shareef & Antony 2011; Shareef & Geethakumary 2011; Kumar *et al.*, 2014; Shareef *et al.*, 2011, 2018; Rijuraj *et al.*, 2020; Shareef & Kumar 2020; Vadhyar *et al.*, 2020; Manoharan *et al.*, 2021; Jose *et al.*, 2024; Mani & Thomas 2025; Neethu *et al.*, 2025; Pradhyumnan & Murugan 2025; Shareef & Kumar 2026) [8, 11, 14, 15, 19, 21, 23, 26, 27-31], among them, *Eugenia anamalaiensis* E.S.S.Kumar, Veldkamp & Shareef, *E. cruciformis* B.Mani & Sinj.Thomas, *E. elapparensis* Robi, Balan & Sujanapal, *E. kalamii* Shareef, E.S.S.Kumar, Shaju & Prakashk., *E. lateritica* Shareef & E.S.S. Kumar, *E. pokkudanii* A.M.Maya, K.M.P.Kumar & V.Suresh, *E. sphaerocarpa* Vadhyar, Sujana, J.H.F.Benj. & G.V.S.Murthy and *E. terphophylla* var. *keralensis* Shareef, E.S.S.Kumar & P.E.Roy are strict endemics of Kerala.

Neethu *et al.* (2025) [19] described a new species, *Eugenia malabarica* Sivu, Neethu & Ratheesh, based on specimens collected from the Malabar Wildlife Sanctuary, Kerala. However, the name *E. malabarica* Sivu, Neethu & Ratheesh is illegitimate because it is a later homonym of *E. malabarica* Bedd., published by Beddome (1872) [3], which is the basionym of *Syzygium malabaricum* (Bedd.) Gamble. Therefore, a replacement name is required for *Eugenia malabarica* Sivu, Neethu & Ratheesh and is proposed below.

Nomenclature

***Eugenia santhoshii*:** Kottaim., Y. Mahesh & Lytan, nom. nov.

Replacement name: *Eugenia malabarica* Sivu, Neethu & Ratheesh in Neethu *et al.*, J. Pl. Sci. Res. 41(2): 308. 2025, nom. illeg., non, *Eugenia malabarica* Bedd., Fl. Sylv. S. India: 199. 1872.

Type: INDIA. Kerala: Kozhikode Distr., Malabar Wildlife Sanctuary, Kakkayam, 810 m, 21 November 2022. S.S. Neethu & Sivu A.R 96710 (holotype: TBGT; isotype: TBGT).

Etymology: The specific epithet is named in honour of Dr. E. S. Santhosh Kumar, Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (TBGRI) in recognition of

his outstanding contributions to the study and documentation of the flora of Kerala.

Distribution: India (Kerala). Endemic.

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