
Validation of the Hybrid Flowering Cherry *Prunus* \times *incam* (Rosaceae)

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ABSTRACT. The name *Prunus* \times *incam* Ingram ex R. Olsen & Whittemore is validated here. Introduced as a cultivated variety in 1947, Ingram's name *Prunus* \times *incam* has been in use as a nomen nudum in horticultural literature and the nursery trade for artificial crosses involving the parent taxa *P. incisa* Thunberg \times *P. campanulata* Maximowicz. *Prunus* \times *incam* is an early flowering tree with two or three flowers in each persistent involucre, spreading sepals, and pink, deeply emarginate petals. Ingram's original introduction, the cultivated variety 'Okamé,' is the most widely grown form.

Key words: Okamé cherry, *Prunus*, Rosaceae.

Prunus L. (Rosaceae Jussieu), with some 200 species, is a ubiquitous component of the cultivated flora in temperate zones, including species that are important as fruit, nut, and ornamental crops. The most important group of ornamentals in the genus are the flowering cherries of *Prunus* subg. *Cerasus* (Miller) Focke sect. *Pseudocerasus* Koehne, a group of small trees from eastern Asia with very showy white or pink flowers (Rehder, 1940).

The Chinese species *Prunus campanulata* Maximowicz historically has attracted the attention of horticulturists because of its early flowering (early to mid-March) and the striking deep pink coloration of its petals. However, *P. campanulata* is a species of southern China, Taiwan, and possibly also the Ryukyu Islands of Japan, although the species may have been introduced here by man (Ohwi et al., 1984; Li & Bartholomew, 2003). Its use in temperate climates is limited by its sensitivity to winter cold, since it can only be relied upon to survive winters in U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) hardiness zones 8 (annual minimum temperatures above -12°C) and warmer (Cathey, 1990).

Plants combining desirable characteristics of *Prunus campanulata* with greater cold tolerance have been produced by crossing *P. campanulata* with *P. incisa* Thunberg, the Fuji cherry, a more cold-tolerant species. *Prunus incisa* is native to Japan in central Honshu on the slopes of Mt. Fuji, Mt. Hakone, and Mt. Yatsu, and through the Southern Alps (Flower Association of Japan, 1982; Ohwi et al., 1984). It is one of the alpine cherries surviving to zone 5 (-28°C)

that flowers in early April in the north temperate zone (Ingram, 1948; Dirr, 1998; Kuitert & Peterse, 1999). The hybrid was first produced ca. 1942 by English breeder Collingwood Ingram, who pollinated *P. incisa* stigmas with pollen collected from *P. campanulata* growing in the temperate house of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (Ingram, 1942, 1948, 1970).

Ingram presented his best *Prunus incisa* \times *P. campanulata* hybrid to the Royal Horticultural Society on April 15, 1947, reported first as *P. incisa* \times *campanulata* var. Okamé by the *Gardeners' Chronicle* (1947), but recorded by the Royal Horticultural Society, which conferred the plant an Award of Merit as *Prunus* \times *incam* var. 'Okamé' (Royal Horticultural Society, 1947a, b). The cultivar, and hybrid epithet, quickly became established in the British horticultural trade, receiving an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society for its outstanding performance in British gardens only seven years after introduction (Fletcher, 1954). The plant was introduced to the United States before its public release, when American horticulturist Henry Skinner brought plants directly from Ingram's garden to the Morris Arboretum, University of Pennsylvania, in 1946 (Meyer & Lewandowski, 1985). Further introductions into the United States and other countries have made this plant widely available in the international horticultural trade. Currently, *P. \times incam* 'Okamé' is a popular, widely used cultivar in temperate areas throughout the world with annual minimum temperatures above -23°C (USDA hardiness zone 6). Recently, additional *P. \times incam* cultivars (e.g., 'Dream Catcher' and 'First Lady') have entered the trade (Pooler, 2007).

Although the name *Prunus \times incam* is used widely in horticultural literature, nursery catalogs, and other garden-related publications, this binomial has never been validly published. Some publications (e.g., Huxley & Griffiths, 1992) dropped the epithet, using only the cultivar name with the genus (e.g., *Prunus* 'Okamé'), but this has not slowed the use of the epithet in the nursery trade. The introduction of a variant spelling, *Prunus \times incamp*, in England by Boddy (1964) and its use by the Flower Association of Japan (1982) and a few American horticulturists (Dirr, 1998, 2000) has introduced further confusion, with both spellings currently used commonly in the trade.



Figure 1. *Prunus* × *incam* Ingram ex R. Olsen & Whittemore. Flowering and fruiting branches. Drawn by R. Olsen from living material of *P.* × *incam* ‘Okamé’ (NA 18355-CL) at the U.S. National Arboretum.

In view of the continued widespread use of *Prunus* × *incam*, and in view of the growing confusion caused by the existence of two well-established variant spellings, it seems appropriate to stabilize the name and its usage by formally publishing it and assigning a type specimen.

Prunus* × *incam Ingram ex R. Olsen & Whittemore, nothosp. nov. [♀ *Prunus incisa* Thunberg × ♂ *Prunus campanulata* Maximowicz]. TYPE:

U.S.A. Washington, D.C.: United States National Arboretum, N side of Crabapple Collection, E of Beechwood Pond, planted tree in mowed meadow, accession NA 18355-CL, 38°54'37"N, 76°57'38"W, 6 m, 22 Mar. 2007, A. T. Whittemore & R. Olsen 07-002 (holotype, NA; isotypes, A, K, MO, MOR, TUS). Figure 1.

Arbor praecox; ramuli hornotini glabri; gemmae 1 ad 3 in quaque axilla. Folia margine argute serrata. Flores 2 ad 3

involucro communi cincti. Sepala patula, 2–3 mm longa; petala carnea, emarginata, ca. 9 mm longa.

Deciduous trees to 8 m tall; bark silvery gray, smooth except for prominent transverse lenticels; young shoots glabrous; buds 1 to 3 per axil; stipules caducous. Petiole 7–12 mm, upper surface villous; glands none or 1 at summit of petiole; leaf blade narrowly obovate or oblanceolate, 47–70 × 22–31 mm, dark green, with 7 to 9 major veins on each side of the midrib, glabrous except for a few inconspicuous villous hairs on both surfaces of major veins and leaf margin, apex slenderly acuminate, base obtuse (seldom acute) or rounded, margins sharply serrate. Inflorescence appearing before expansion of leaves, of 2 or 3 flowers on 3–13 mm pedicels, common peduncle absent or to 3 mm; bracts to 5 mm, several around base of inflorescence, outer bracts brown and scalelike, forming an involucre, inner bracts green, obovate, strongly toothed; involucre persistent in flower. Flower with petals pink, hypanthium and sepals red; hypanthium cylindrical, 5–8 × 2–3 mm, glabrous; sepals triangular, 2–3 × 1.5–2 mm, entire and glabrous, shorter than hypanthium and spreading perpendicular to it; petals oblong to obovate, deeply emarginate, ca. 9 × 4–6 mm; stamens 4–7 mm, anthers plump, pollen copious and well-formed; style projecting 6–11 mm beyond hypanthium. Fruit not seen, rarely produced.

Discussion. The type specimen came from a plant of *Prunus* × *incam* ‘Okamé’ (NA 18355-CL) at the U.S. National Arboretum that traces back, via the Washington Park Arboretum in Seattle, Washington, to the original distribution of Ingram’s cultivar by the Morris Arboretum. There seems to be no valid reason to replace the original, well-established spelling, “incam,” for the later variant “incamp.” It is appropriate to recognize Collingwood Ingram as the author of this epithet, since he was the first to apply the name to this plant (Royal Horticultural Society, 1947a). It is questionable whether Ingram originally intended “Incam” as the epithet of a Latin binomial. In the first publications where it appeared (Royal Horticultural Society, 1947a: 374, 1947b: lvi), Ingram may have intended “Incam” merely as a shorthand notation of parentage, combining a syllable from each of the parent species. However, *P. incam* does not fit the definition of a hybrid formula as given in Article 23.6d and H.10.3 of the *International Code of Botanical Nomenclature* (McNeill et al., 2006). Ingram (1970: 182, 193) casually referred to seedlings of *P. incisa* × *P. campanulata* as the Incam grex. In the six decades that have passed since *P. incam* was first published,

incam has come into common use as the Latin epithet for the hybrid *P. incisa* × *P. campanulata*. Meyer et al. (1993) cited this taxon as *P. ×incam* Fletcher, attributing it to H. R. Fletcher, the author of the 1954 article presenting plants that received awards from the Royal Horticultural Society that year (Fletcher, 1954). However, Fletcher’s publication lacked Latin descriptions, so that the hybrid name was not validated in this publication. Meyer et al. may have overlooked several earlier articles on *P. incisa* × *P. campanulata* hybrids (Ingram, 1942, 1948; Royal Horticultural Society, 1947a, b) and the first publication of *P. incam* (Royal Horticultural Society, 1947a).

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