

International Poplar Commission
Working party on Taxonomy, Nomenclature and Registration
(formerly the Sub-Committee on Nomenclature and Registration)
Activity Report August 2014- September 2016

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Introduction

The International Poplar Commission of the FAO holds the International Cultivar Registration Authorities (ICRAs) for the genera *Populus* (poplars, cottonwoods and aspens) and *Salix* (willows).

The ICRA system operates under the *International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants* (ICNCP), and its responsibility is to ensure that each plant cultivar receives a unique, authoritative botanical name. The chief aim is to prevent duplicated uses of cultivar epithets within a genus, and to ensure that names are in accordance with the latest edition of the ICNCP. The system is a voluntary, non-statutory one and it does not grant any legal protection over the name or the plant. Legal protection should be sought through national Plant Breeders' Rights or Plant Patents. However, the registration of cultivar names should be felt by all sensible persons as a vital need, much as internationally accepted standards of any sort.

The ICRA produces and maintains lists of names, along with other relevant information about the cultivars, which are already registered in the public domain and make these lists available to the international community as a free service, without commercial interest. All individuals or institutions who intent to release a new cultivar must send an application to the IPC providing essential information regarding the origin, a synthetic description and a proposed denomination. After verifying that the proposed denomination is acceptable according to international rules and that the accompanying information corresponds to the needs of the registration, the new cultivar is then included into the International Register of Cultivars.

Tasks of the Subcommittee

- To publish the *International Register of Populus Cultivars* and the *International Register of Salix Cultivars*
- To publish Checklists of all known epithets and commercial synonyms for cultivars of *Populus* L. and *Salix* L.
- To accept for registration new cultivars, which are appropriately named following the rules of the *International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants* (ICNCP)
- To update, amend and reissue the Registers periodically
- To publicize the registration procedure for *Populus* and *Salix* cultivars to the widest appropriate audience
- To cooperate with statutory plant registration authorities regarding the cultivar epithets for *Populus* L. and *Salix* L.

Toward that end, the following priorities for the next 4 years were outlined during the 46th Session of the Executive Committee (Dehradun, October 2012):

Activities planned for the 2012-2016 period:

Activity 1 – Complete the updating of the Poplar Registry

Continue the compilation of the updated version of the Poplar Register. The most current version of the International Register of Poplar Cultivars with the accompanying information about old and new cultivars is published on the sub-portal.

Activity 2 – Establish the Registration of *Salix* Cultivars

Continue efforts toward the establishment of the *Salix* registration and develop a viable format through discussions with willow breeders and other interested parties. Make another attempt to contact the Chair of the Commission on Nomenclature and Cultivar Registration through the FAO Secretariat. Compile the first version of ‘*Salix* Cultivars Checklist’.

Activity 3 - Raise Awareness

Continue raising awareness of the importance of cultivar registration by identifying and contacting interested parties. Continue the discussion on how to build an effective outreach to National Poplar Commissions. A new attempt will be made to approach the NPCs through the FAO Secretariat. The active breeding programs and research centers for *Populus* will be identified and contacted directly while addressing the importance of cultivar registration. It is also important to intensify the interaction with other working party members, especially “Poplar and Willow Genetics, Conservation and Improvement” to build an effective collaboration.

Contact researchers who indicated their willingness to contribute to the work of the Sub-Committee. Maintain the updated sub-portal for the working party by compiling a new network of contact persons and by updating the documents posted on the sub-committee Website.

Activity 4 – Maintain a network and update the portal

The maintenance of an updated documentation of cultivars depends upon the co-operation of all involved with the creation and marketing of new plants. To achieve this level of cooperation it is necessary to continue raising awareness concerning the importance of submitting information on newly published cultivars to the IPC for approval of the denominations. The active cooperation of the National Poplar Commission should be encouraged.

The following outlines the work that has been carried out for the period August 2014-September 2016.

Activities and outputs achieved:

Activity 1 – Complete the update of the Poplar Registry

The updated version of the Register was compiled during 2015-2016 and made available at the IPC web site in August 2016. Twenty one new names were added to the Register. The International Register maintains three hundred and forty nine varieties.

A Checklist of commercial names and experimental codes is maintained and updated. During 2015 we have added 98 names/codes. At present the Checklist is a compilation of 440 names and 94 cultivars with experimental codes only.

A compilation of records of poplar cultivars for ornamental uses was accomplished during summer 2016. The list is made up of sixty cultivars and they were included into the Register and the Checklist.

Two annual reports regarding the data on *Populus* cultivars were sent to the International Commission for Nomenclature and Cultivar Registration of the International Society for Horticultural Sciences in June of 2015 and 2016 upon the Commission's request. Some clarifications about the registration process were made by the members of the Commission to assist the Sub-Committee with the registration process.

Activity 2 – Establish the Registration of *Salix* Cultivars

As the clonal selections and hybridization of *Salix* are currently expanding it is important that a similar system for *Salix* cultivar registration be in place. The International Cultivar Registration Authority (ICRA) for the genus *Salix* was not appointed until 2013. After this appointment a compilation of *The Checklist for Cultivars of Salix* was identified as the most urgent first step as the publication of this *Checklist* serves as the foundation for the regulation of nomenclature in the *Salix* cultivars denomination class, while assuring its' adherence to the ICNCP rules.

The Checklist was compiled during 2014-2015 followed by a thorough review by *Salix* taxonomists. Eight hundred and fifty-four cultivar epithets with accompanying information were included into the first version of the *Checklist for Cultivars of Salix L. (Willow)*, the compilation of which was completed in November 2015 (163 p.). *The Checklist* includes all epithets that have been in use (synonyms and trade designations). A hard copy manuscript about *The Checklist* was produced in 2015 to popularize its publication: Kuzovkina Y. A. 2015. Compilation of the Checklist for Cultivars of *Salix L. (Willow)*. HortScience 50(1): 1608-1609 to.

The completion of the Checklist provides the baseline for the formal registration process of new cultivars and construction of the comprehensive Register for *Salix* cultivars.

Activity 3 - Raise Awareness

In order to promote the registration process for *Populus* and *Salix* cultivars, the active breeding programs and research centres were identified to be contacted directly to address the importance of cultivar registration. After updating the Sub-Committee portal with new references and resources in August 2016, researchers and breeders involved in poplar and willow cultivars selection will be directly contacted via a 'Request Letter' to submit their applications for the new cultivars to the Sub-Committee and to update the passport data concerning the previously registered cultivars by December 2016 deadline.

In order to further raise awareness among interested parties of the importance of cultivar registration through the cooperation of Poplar and Willow breeders, a series of publications regarding to the cultivar registration process were prepared and uploaded on the portal in August 2016.

Activity 4 – Maintain a network and update the portal

A mailing list of participants of the Network was assembled using various sources which included: 1) all geneticist/breeders listed in the “List of Poplar and Willow Experts” maintained at the ICP website; 2) a tentative list of contact persons as prepared by the Sub-Committee during a session in 2012; 3) major contributors to Chapter 4 “The Domestication and Conservation of *Populus* and *Salix* Genetic Resources” by Stanton *et al*; 4) some members of the Executive Committee of the National Poplar Councils. The members of the Network will be contacted as mentioned above.

The Sub-Committee portal was extensively updated. The current materials for the website included new Registration Forms, the updated versions of the Register and Checklists, as well as supplementary materials: “The importance of registering cultivar names with ICRA”, “How to name a new cultivar”, “Registration of Poplar cultivars”, “Registration of Willow cultivars”, “Publications of the Sub-committee”. These documents were uploaded to the IPC website in August 2016 before the 25th Conference of the International Poplar Commission in September 2016.

Difficulties encountered and corrections suggested

The previous approach adopted by the Sub-Committee relied on the assumption that plant breeders were fully aware of the registration process through the ICRA. However, this has not been the case as only a few registration forms were submitted during 2012-2016. Due to complications associated with the registration process in general and complexity of the existing organizational structure, the future strategy for obtaining voluntary submissions should rely on effective outreach to the breeders.

The very extensive update of the Register and Checklists required a significant time commitment during this period and did not allow the Sub-Committee to promote the outreach to poplar and willow breeders. It is expected that the registration process will be streamlined after the completion of these important documents. The new forms and guidelines appearing on the IPC website are expected to facilitate the registration process.

Program of work for the next two years 2016-2018

Activity 1 – Continue the update of the *International Register of Populus Cultivars* and *The Checklist for Cultivars of Populus*.

Activity 2 – Initiate the *International Register of Salix Cultivars* and continue the update of *The Checklist for Cultivars of Salix*.

Activity3 – The main focus during 2016-2018 will be raise awareness through effective outreach efforts to all involved in cultivar development and to facilitate comprehensive compilation of international records of plant registrations through the ICRA. This will be achieved through direct contacts with Poplar and Willow breeders to obtain more detailed and updated information about registered and new cultivars. This important initiative will contribute to the ongoing compilation of the comprehensive records and nomenclatural stability of cultivated poplars and willows.

Activity 4 – Maintain a network and update the portal. Significant improvements in cooperation between all organizations and individuals regarding the process for cultivar registration through ICRA will be further pursued in order to update the cultivar records. An integrated approach to networking with breeders and outreach to all organizations involved in domestication programs, which are fundamental for development of the international database, should be further developed during the next two years.