



REINWARDTIA, 75 YEARS OF ENDEAVOUR INVESTIGATING INDONESIA'S BOTANY AND BEYOND

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ABSTRACT

SUMADIJAYA, A., AGUSTIANI, E. L., SENJAYA, S. K. & WULANSARI, T. Y. I. 2025. Reinwardtia, 75 years of endeavour investigating Indonesia's botany and beyond. *Reinwardtia* 24(1): 137–144. — Decades of publications in *Reinwardtia* reveal the dynamics and transition of botanical research in Indonesia. This synthesis delivers snapshots across third-quarter-century accumulation of plant and fungi knowledge, mostly in taxonomy, with a glimpse into ecology, ethnobotany, and others. Disparity of studies is prevalent for Angiosperms and taxa in Indonesia, particularly Java, Sumatra, and Sulawesi. Across decades, the transition of editors and authors delivers strong evidence of a scientific void and prolonged time to recover the vacuum. It also provides a sweet spot between decolonization while maintaining global participation.

Key words: Botany, Indonesia, journal, Malesia, *Reinwardtia*.

ABSTRAK

SUMADIJAYA, A., AGUSTIANI, E. L., SENJAYA, S. K. & WULANSARI, T. Y. I. 2025. Reinwardtia, 75 tahun dalam usaha menyelidiki botani Indonesia dan sekitarnya. *Reinwardtia* 24(1): 137–144. — Puluhan tahun publikasi dalam jurnal *Reinwardtia* telah mengungkap dinamika dan pergeseran penelitian botani di Indonesia. Sintesis ini memberikan potret dan akumulasi pengetahuan ilmiah mengenai tumbuhan dan jamur selama tiga perempat abad dengan dominasi pada taksonomi dan dilengkapi oleh ekologi, etnobotani, dan hal lainnya. Kesenjangan terlihat karena sebagian besar cakupan studi membahas tumbuhan berbunga dan taksa yang ada di Indonesia, terutama di Jawa, Sumatra, dan Sulawesi. Dalam beberapa dekade, pergeseran editor dan penulis juga menampilkan bukti nyata dari kekosongan ilmiah serta waktu yang lama untuk memulihkannya. Hal tersebut juga akhirnya menampilkan keseimbangan antara dekolonisasi dan partisipasi global.

Kata kunci: Botani, Indonesia, jurnal, Malesia, *Reinwardtia*.

HISTORY AND PROGRESS

This year, 2025, *Reinwardtia* celebrates its first third-quarter century of publishing intellectual achievements in botany. The journal's name immortalised C. G. C. Reinwardt (1773–1854), a Prussian born, Dutch botanist employed by the king of the Netherlands, Willem I, to investigate the natural history and agricultural aspects of the

colony back then (Goss, 2011). Before *Reinwardtia* got its name, the precursor of this journal had experienced name changes time and time again. It was started by M. Treub in 1898 as an outlet for scientific studies for the *Instituut voor Plantenziekten te Buitenzorg* (present-day Botanical Garden/Kebun Raya Bogor) in the Dutch East Indies (present-day Indonesia). It was named as *Bulletin de l'Institut Botanique de Buitenzorg* and had 21

volumes until 1902. Afterwards, the name changed to *Bulletin du Département de l'Agriculture aux Indes Néerlandaises* and issued 47 volumes between 1906 and 1911. Before the current name, the journal was renamed *Bulletin du Jardin Botanique de Buitenzorg*, or *Bulletin of the Botanic Gardens of Buitenzorg* from 1911 to 1950. A critical period occurred in 1950, as it marked a transfer and transition of power from the Dutch to the Indonesians. It was very likely that this momentum created a rationale for the latest name change.

Since its inception in December 1950 until the latest issue in December 2024, this journal has published 494 articles in almost 7,500 pages within 23 volumes. Initially, the structure of the published papers was relatively simple. Apart from the main text, the articles merely had a summary, despite its inconsistency, and without abstracts or keywords. Citations to previously published sources appeared within the main text but without a list of references. Abstracts appeared as early as 1972 in Vol. 8(3) and consistently in 1982 in Vol. 10(1) onwards, followed by the list of references in 1992 in Vol. 11(1), whereas keywords appeared in 2002 in Vol. 12(1). This dynamic represents a growing complexity and resolution in delivering botanical science to the specialized audience.

Reinwardtia has published most of its articles in English, with a few in French and German, particularly during the early days of its publications. Articles were exclusively populated with international authors and almost all exposed Malesia, a vast phytogeographical area that stretches from the South of the Isthmus of Kra in the west to New Guinea in the east, encompassing seven countries, *i.e.* Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Timor-Leste, and Papua New Guinea (Van Steenis, 1950). This reputation, however, backfired when articles in the 1962 issue referred to British Malaya, explicitly suggesting unpatriotic content that entailed forbidding the distribution of the next issue in 1963 (Goss, 2011).

Looking through the history, the thickest article published in *Reinwardtia* was 230 pages long (Nelmes, 1951) and followed by only eleven articles beyond 100 pages, some of which are one-article journals (de Wit, 1956; Sleumer, 1960; Kartawinata & Mueller-Dombois, 1972; Soenarko, 1977). These massive works, along with others have higher number of pages reflect more information synthesized in a paper. Despite having no solid evidence on how long it took to compose a thick manuscript, a longer time in thinking and writing is a logical consequence that warrants quality, which can be compromised in a short period rush.

EDITORS AND AUTHORS: SCIENTIFIC VOID AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

The first editors of *Reinwardtia* were M. A. Donk of Herbarium Bogoriense (BO) and C. G. G. J. van Steenis of Flora Malesiana Foundation. Together, they orchestrated several issues authored by eminent scientists from different nationalities. In 1955, Donk was fired by Koesnoto Setyodiwardjo, head of the Botanic Gardens and chief academic biologist, who aimed to decolonize science in Indonesia (Goss, 2011). He was substituted by A. Dilmy, the first Indonesian who became the Director of BO and the editor of this journal from Vol. 3 in 1956. Dilmy accompanied van Steenis until 1962, then he single-handedly managed Vol. 6 in 1963. This marked the transition of the journal's editors from Dutch nationals to Indonesians. However, the regular annual issues dwindled because soon after, 1964 was the first year of absence after 13 years of consistent uninterrupted publications of *Reinwardtia*. Years later, this journal suffered irregular publications in the long run (Fig. 1). Therefore, volumes lagged behind, which stemmed from the occasional absence of annual publications. This phenomenon was recognized as a scientific void that slowly crept in after Donk departed, followed by the exodus of Dutch scientists (Goss, 2011).

Prior to 1956, all contributing authors were non-Indonesians, as there were very few, if any, Indonesian botanists at the time. Dilmy (1956) was the first Indonesian who published articles in *Reinwardtia*. Subsequently, several Indonesian authors slowly fueled the journal, such as Reksodihardjo (1960), Soepadmo (1961), Rifai (1968a), and Kartawinata (1972). They were the cohorts of the Biology Academy, later known as the Agriculture Academy of Ciawi, a crash-course programme to fulfil the needs of capable human resources during the absence of a large Biology department in the country (Goss, 2011). Most of them returned home and were stationed at Herbarium Bogoriense, became the next generation of *Reinwardtia* editors, and set traction to move forward Indonesian science, particularly in botany.

Despite more Ciawi cohorts had returned and multiple sporadic recruitments of botanists from Indonesian university graduates, they were not enough to fulfill *Reinwardtia*'s publication on an annual basis decades after the vacuum started. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the publications of botanical studies across 75 years, split into three intervals of 25 years for the ease of discussion below. This journal suffered years without publications in all of the periods, with the lowest state in the second period. This period was marked by multiple publi-

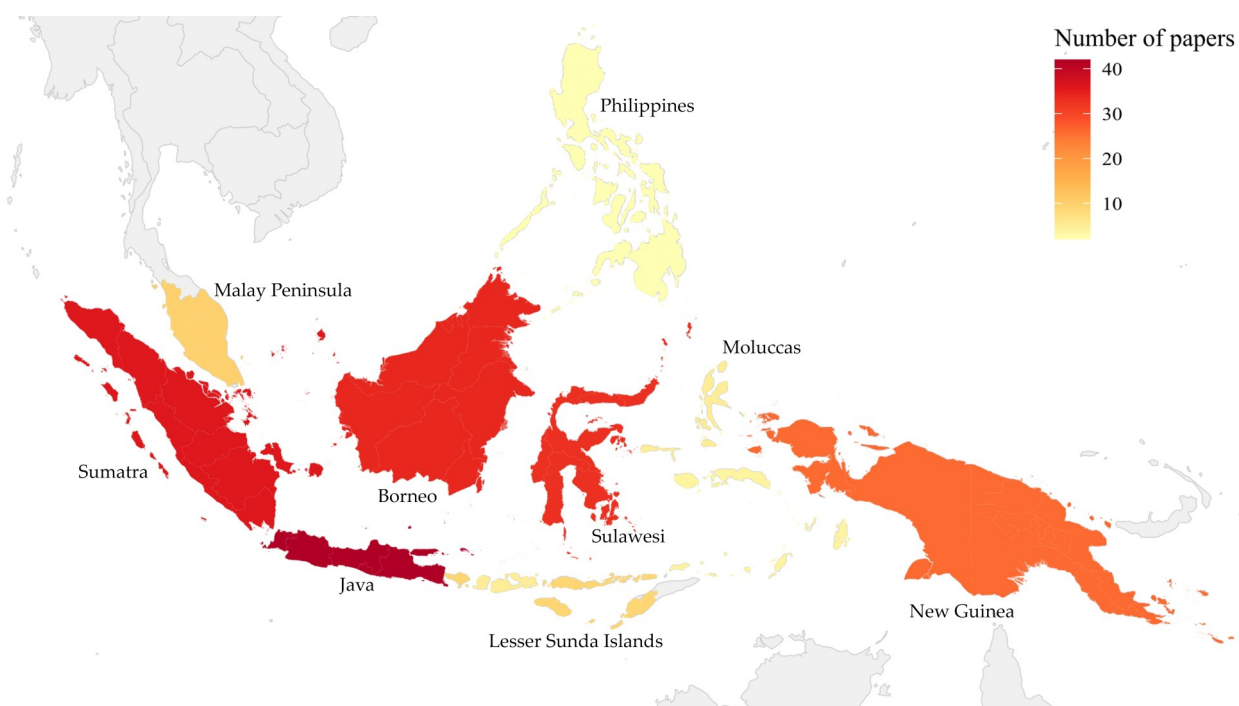


Fig. 1. Map of publication density based on the titles of the articles exclusively across regions in Malesia. Most of the paper focused on Indonesia, especially in Java (darkest red), followed by Sumatra, Borneo, and Sulawesi (lighter red). Archipelagos like Lesser Sunda Island and the Moluccas have the lowest number of publications. The Philippines has the lowest tally from all regions.

cation gaps, and some of them lasted for multiple (two–three) years. The first and last periods also had multiple gaps, but in contrast, each lasted only a single year. This is a piece of clear, hard evidence that the scientific vacuum is real and needs a long time to recover.

REGIONS COVERED: BIAS AND DARK SPOTS

The locus for the most articles in *Reinwardtia* are within Malesia with 462 articles (99.35%), historically referred to as “Malaysia” before the independence of the country of Malaysia in 1967. Furthermore, the articles' coverage is biased towards Indonesia, as this journal is under one of the country's institutions, currently the National Research and Innovation Agency, BRIN. Based merely on the titles, the Indonesia's tally (Fig. 1) demonstrates that Java (41) is the top area of studies, followed by Sumatra (35) and Sulawesi (32). Kalimantan, or Indonesian Borneo, tallied 23 out of 32 articles for Borneo, which also comprises Sabah and Sarawak of Malaysia, and Brunei. Meanwhile, Indonesian Papua has 22 of the total of 25 articles discussing the whole island of New Guinea. Low counts occurred in archipelagoes such as the Lesser Sunda Islands (LSI) (19) and the Moluccas (eight). In LSI, Bali and Sumbawa have the highest number of studies, with eight and seven publications, respectively. Other islands, such as Sumba, Flores,

Lombok, Alor and Timor, have very few studies highlighting the need for more botanical investigations in the future. Meanwhile, Seram and Halmahera in the Moluccas are the top records with four and three articles, respectively. Despite Java has the highest tally of articles, the other major islands in Indonesia are not left behind starkly. However, more efforts are required for the archipelagoes like LSI and Moluccas to know their plant biodiversity. This suggests that more specimens have been collected and are available for studies from outside of Java. Overall, this increases the number of specimens relative to the area, known as the density index (Van Steenis, 1950; 1972).

The number of articles is relatively low for Peninsular Malaya (nine) and the Philippines (one), as well as beyond Malesia. Outside the region, this journal also covers botanical studies from Thailand, Andaman, Nicobar, Burma or present-day Myanmar, Bhutan, India, Ceylon or present-day Sri Lanka, Hawaii, Fiji, and the New World in a total of 32 articles (0.65%).

EVOLVING CONTENT: TRANSITION AND EXPANSION OF DISCIPLINES

The firm scope of *Reinwardtia* across decades is taxonomic botany, plant sociology, and ecology. The overall content, however, mostly deals with taxonomic botany up to 427 articles (86%) as exhibited by Fig. 2. Apart from taxonomy, 67 articles

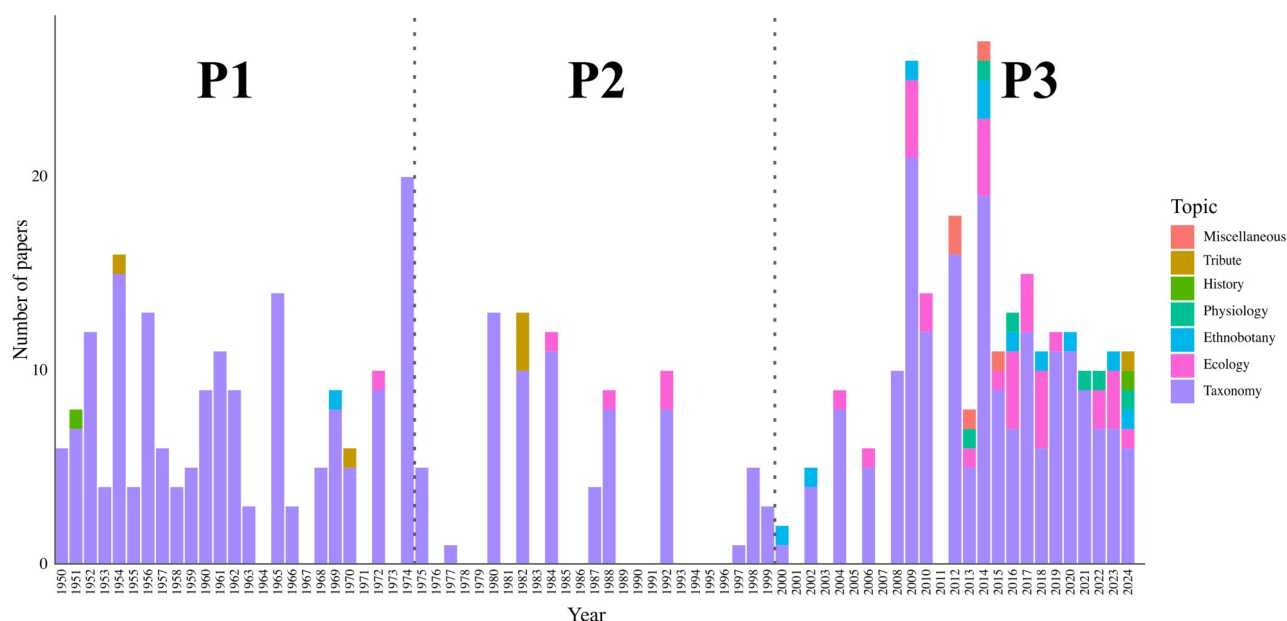


Fig. 2. The number of articles (y-axis) of *Reinwardtia* across 75 years, from 1950 to 2024 (x-axis) by topic. The entire duration is divided by two dashed lines into three intervals of 25 years, P (Period)1 (1950–1974), P2 (1975–1999), and P3 (2000–2024), to portray the dynamics over time. On average, P3 has the higher average number of articles annually. Topics are colour-coded. The data strongly exhibits a strong bias for taxonomy than the rest of the topics across 75 years. Period three shows more diverse topics published now that signify flourishing disciplines these days.

(14%) deal with various aspects of ecology (37), ethnobotany (11), physiology (five), history (three), and miscellaneous others (11). In miscellaneous other, this journal hosted one-of-a-kind studies on identification trends (one), biodiversity information system (one), conservation (one), book reviews (two), and professional achievements (six). Celebrations of professional achievement were presented for six influential figures, *i.e.* D. F. van Slooten (van Steenis, 1954), B. Prijanto (Rifai, 1970), A. Dilmy (Kostermans, 1982), A. J. G. H. Kostermans (Jacobs, 1982), K. Setyodiwirdjo (Rifai, 1982), and K. Kartawinata (Wong, 2024).

Honing deeper through data has shown interesting phenomena such as the advent of ecology and ethnobotany, especially by Indonesian botanists. The study by Kartawinata & Mueller-Dombois (1972) marked the first article on ecology and phytosociology. That was the advent of ecology in Indonesia, which years later was followed by Riswan (1988) and Abdulhadi (1992a; 1992b). Subsequently, Kartawinata also coauthored with his students in Kartawinata *et al.* (2004), Priatna *et al.* (2006), Kartawinata *et al.* (2008), Sadili *et al.* (2009), and Helmi *et al.* (2009), among others. In ethnobotany, the first paper was published early on by Kostermans (1969) that explained the contraceptive use of Cinnamon in New Guinea. Several more decades passed until the first article on ethnobotany was written by Indonesians such as

Walujo (2000) and followed by Purwanto (2002), who then became the patrons for subsequent publications, *i.e.* Susiarti *et al.* (2009) and Dewi *et al.* (2016). Therefore, this journal is a testament to the regeneration of botanists by the transfer of knowledge, particularly in ecology and ethnobotany, apart of taxonomy.

TAXA PUBLISHED: DISPARITY AMONG GROUPS

In the beginning, multiple publications of *Reinwardtia* presented a pragmatic approach for investigating a wide range of non-closely related taxa, such as miscellaneous botanical notes, precursors, as well as material for taxonomic revisions. Later, these sorts of articles decreased over time. Articles published here discussed a vast number of groups that skew towards Angiosperms (367) followed by Fungi (35), Ferns (21), Algae (five), Bryoflora (three), Lichens (three), then Gymnosperms (one), and even Flagellates (one) as seen in Fig. 3. Families with the most taxonomic treatments are Poaceae (28), Pandanaceae (22), Lauraceae (15), Malvaceae (including Bombacaceae, Sterculiaceae, and Tiliaceae) (14), Begoniaceae (13), Orchidaceae and Fabaceae (11 each) and Rubiaceae (ten). Meanwhile, the genera with the most publications are *Begonia* (13), *Freycinetia* (12), and *Nepenthes* (eight). These taxa have a high number of publications due to: the presence of experts with decades

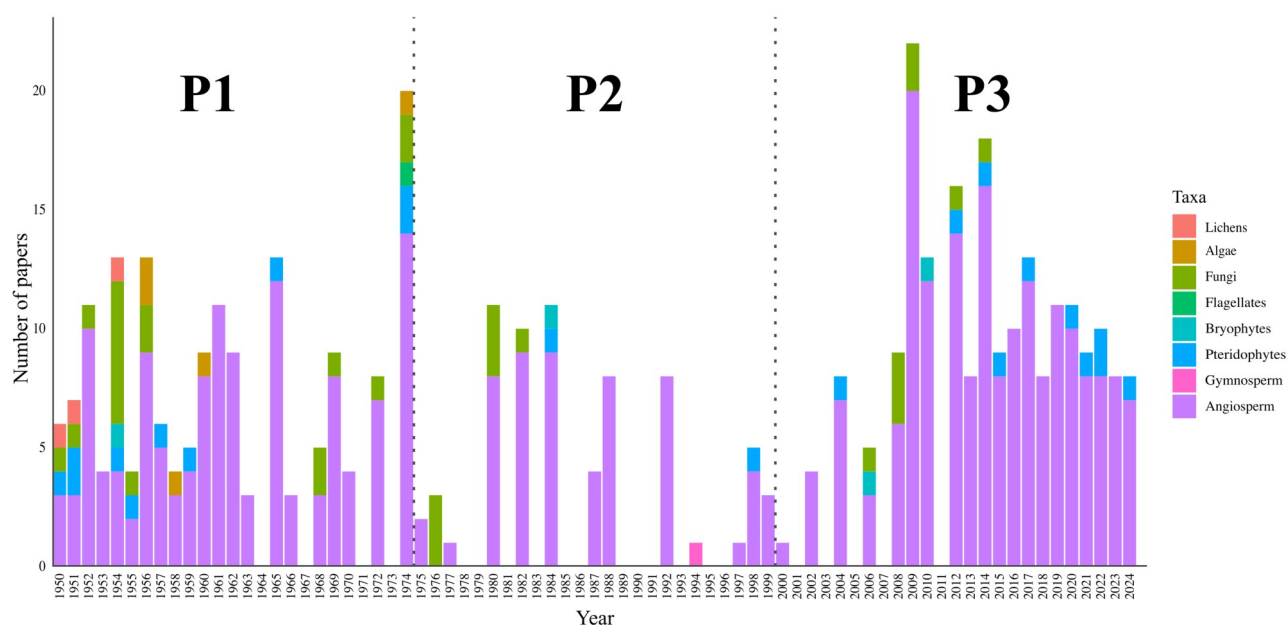


Fig. 3. The number of articles (y-axis) of *Reinwardtia* across 75 years, from 1950 to 2024 (x-axis) by taxa. The entire duration is divided by two dashed lines into three intervals of 25 years, P1 (1950–1974), P2 (1975–1999), and P3 (2000–2024), to portray the dynamics over time. On average, P3 has the highest number of articles annually. The division of the flora and fungi groups is colour-coded. The data strongly exhibits a strong bias for angiosperms than the rest of the groups across 75 years. In P1, there were more diverse groups that were published by wide-ranging international authors. This emphasizes the importance of more experts across different groups.

of experience, or a relatively high number of experts working on them or the combination of both. Due to the quantity of published articles in this journal, we currently have more updated information on these taxa than on the rest of the Indonesian taxa.

There are 1,776 names published in *Reinwardtia* as recorded by IPNI (<https://www.ipni.org/p/1057-2>). Those names represented novel taxa at multiple ranks of genus, sections, series, species, and infraspecies (variants, forma, and subspecies). There were 16 new genera—several of them are briefly listed below—described from a handful of families. Kostermans (1952; 1962; 1970; 1974) described *Kalappia* (Fabaceae), *Septogarcinia* (Clusiaceae), *Jarandersonia* (Tiliaceae, now Malvaceae), and *Triadodaphne* (Lauraceae). He also hinted on another new genus possibility in Lauraceae (Kostermans, 1992). His influence on young Indonesian botanists back then was profound, thus honoured in *Kostermansia* of Bombacaceae, currently in Malvaceae (Reksodihardjo, 1959) and *Kostermansinda* (Rifai, 1968b) for Angiosperms and Fungi, respectively. Widjaja (1997) described *Fimbribambusa*, *Neololeba*, *Parabambusa*, and *Pinga* while studying Indonesian bamboos. *Pubistylus*, a genus of Rubiaceae from Andaman, was the only genus published here outside of Malesia (Thothathri, 1966). The latest two genera published in this journal were Rubiaceae *-Dibridsonia* and *Canthiumera-* by

Wong *et al.* (2018). The publications of these taxa exhibited discoveries of new taxonomic entities that never been encountered before, therefore crucial to our cumulative understanding on plant relationship and classification.

Taxa discoveries dominate publications in *Reinwardtia*. Unbalanced novel taxa discoveries—particularly species—are skewed towards hundreds of Angiosperm and merely a handful of ferns (19 species) and macroscopic fungi (27 species). This reflects one of the taxonomic impediments on human resources—more specialists available on Angiosperm than the rest of the groups—as stated by Sumadijaya (2024). Taxa discoveries bring new names that delimit species boundaries into botanical science, irrespective whether these ones are treated as synonyms in the future. Taxa transfers as new combinations are excluded because the entities were already known back then, but merely occurred at a rank in the taxonomic hierarchy. Angiosperm has the highest new names published with the highest records on Lauraceae (301), Poaceae (74), and Fagaceae (37). Publications of new names of species came either solo or in collaboration with multiple co-authors. Solo authors made the most contribution in several families, such as Kostermans (1968) who published 301 names of Lauraceae and 40 names of Malvaceae in this journal. All new species of Fagaceae (37) and Cucurbitaceae (18) were exclusively published by Soepad-

mo (1970) and Rugayah (1998), respectively.

In addition, multiple authors worked either together or independently in several families to contribute novel taxa as follows: 20 new species of Pandanaceae, 19 new species of Begoniaceae and twelve new species of Arecaceae. Another significant number of taxa discoveries also came as a combination of either working solo or with collaborators, such as Widjaja (1987; 1997; 2009; 2020), Widjaja *et al.* (2004), Damayanto & Widjaja (2016), who described 69 Bamboos out of 74 new species (93%) of Poaceae in this journal.

INFLUENCE AND IMPACT TO DATE

Most of the articles published before 1980 were written by single authors. Later, a gradual transition occurred toward multi-authored contributions, often involving authors of different nationalities. The most productive author was Kostermans with 69 articles (almost 14% of the total articles). The data also shows that Kostermans undoubtedly was the most influential person back then, based on the taxa described, both genera and species. His path was followed by several frequent authors, either working solo or with coauthor(s), such as Kartawinata and J. F. Veldkamp (each 22), Rifai (16), followed by Widjaja (15), Donk & Rugayah, each of whom has eleven articles. These authors share something in common, *i.e.* prolonged experience of botanical research. In addition, their works also evidently appear and accumulate in other journals with a similar topic and scope, *i.e.* *Kew Bulletin*, *Blumea*, and *The Gardens' Bulletin Singapore* among other.

Some of these articles have a lasting impact, receiving citations over and over again decades after the publications. Widjaja (1997), for example, was cited very low-less than ten, in the first decade after the publication. This article, however, was cited often in the last 13 years, with the highest annual citation (14) in 2023 alone. This confirms the lasting impact of a publication as mentioned by Wang & Barabasi (2013). Unfortunately, the performance of botanical articles in the long run is often discounted from the current rating systems, such as World of Science and Scopus, that weigh the number of citations in a short amount of time, two and four years immediately after publication, respectively. For example, since 2020, *Reinwardtia* has been indexed by Scopus (<https://www.scopus.com/sources.uri>) and is consistently placed in Quartile (Q)4 of the Plant Science discipline. The low rating is propelled because of: 1. It focuses on a specific region and taxa that were under cited in the first four years, and 2. It competes with the rest of the journals in various sub disciplines in Plant Science. This is a profound fact of short-sighted mechanisms in measuring the impact of journal in a specific discipline that is character-

ized by long-term relevance and few specialists (Krell, 2000; 2002). These shortcomings, despite being unproportional judging the quality of the journal, indicate that *Reinwardtia* requires a new and fresh idea and strategy to boost its reputation further.

EPILOGUE, A LONG WAY AHEAD

The narrated facts and numbers above present the intellectual achievements of botanists investigating Malesia's flora and fungi. This simple yet informative piece of writing captures the dynamic progress of botanical endeavour in the making and uncovers a long and winding history of botany in the Malesia phytogeographical region with a strong emphasis on Indonesia. The scientific void was real and took decades to recover back to normal. This reflection is an anticipation of any potential risk of scientific vacuum in the future. Lastly, *Reinwardtia* is one of the intellectual gems that is striving with more taxa to discover, more revisions and monographs to accomplish in the future.

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AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

AS: Idea conception, data mining and processing, visual graphics, manuscript writing and editing, ELA: Data processing, visual graphics, SKS: Data processing, visual graphics, TYIW: Data mining and processing, manuscript editing.

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