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Evaluation of Proposed Amended Names of Several Pseudomonads and Xanthomonads and Recommendations

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Evaluation of Proposed Amended Names of Several Pseudomonads and Xanthomonads and Recommendations

N. W. Schaad, A. K. Vidaver, G. H. Lacy, K. Rudolph, and J. B. Jones

Due to a general misconception among plant pathologists about acceptance of proposals to change the nomenclature of bacteria, we provide an analysis of several recently proposed names supported by The American Phytopathological Society (APS) Bacteriology Committee. Major changes in nomenclature began in 1973, when the Judicial Commission of the International Committee on Systematic Bacteriology (ICSB) proposed a revision in the nomenclature of bacteria (17) and appointed an Ad Hoc Committee to prepare a list of currently valid names of plant-pathogenic bacteria that were adequately described. This list of names was compiled and published in 1980 (4) by members of the Bacteriology Taxonomy Committee of The International Society of Plant Pathology and included in the Approved Lists of Bacterial Names (22). Despite the publication of the Rules of Nomenclature of Bacteria (17,23), the ICSB did not approve the names in the approved list. The ICSB simply approved of the listing of the names in lists with new starting dates for the operation of the rule of priority of nomenclature. Proposals to elevate and rename several pathovars of the genus Pseudomonas and Xanthomonas to the rank of species has caused great confusion in the literature. This list of names was compiled and published in 1980 (4) by members of the Bacteriology Taxonomy Committee of The International Society of Plant Pathology and included in the Approved Lists of Bacterial Names (22). Dis-sonance Committee of The International Society of Plant Pathology and expect to adopt them for publication in a future American Phytopathological Society Laboratory Guide for Identification of Plant Pathogenic Bacteria. Upon review of published data and the Rules of The International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria, we make the following recommendations. We reject the proposal to change the name of P. syringae pv. phaseolicola and glycinea to P. savastanoi pv. phaseolicola and glycinea, respectively, because both pathogens are easily differentiated phenotypically from pv. savastanoi and convincing genetic data to support such a change are lacking. We accept the elevation of P. syringae pv. savastanoi to the rank of species. We accept the reinstatement of X. oryzae to the rank of species with the inclusion of X. oryzae as a pathovar of X. oryzae and we accept the species X. populi. We agree with the elevation of the pv. cassavae, cucurbitae, hyacinthi, pisi, and translucens to the rank of species but not pv. melonis, theicola, and vacicaria type B. We recommend that all type A X. vacicaria be retained as X. campestris pv. vacicaria and all type B X. vacicaria be named X. exitiosa. We reject the newly proposed epithets arboricola, bronti, codiae (poinsettiala type B), hortorum, sacchari, and vacicola and the transfer of many pathovars of X. campestris to X. axonopodis. The proposed pathovars of X. axonopodis should be retained as pathovars of X. campestris.
and *Pseudomonas* spp. since 1980, there have been few pathovars that have been elevated to the rank of species. However, recent proposals to place several pseudomonads into new genera, elevate several pathovars of the genera *Pseudomonas* and *Xanthomonas* to the rank of species, and rename several of them have been published (7,30). We believe the accumulated data warrant elevation and acceptance of most of these taxa, but not some newly proposed epithets and especially not some well-described, historically significant pathogens. We remind colleagues that proposals are simply proposals; they are not mandated by any international rule. Discussions and analyses are needed before proposed names become accepted and universally used. Many scientists believe that once a taxonomic proposal is published in the *International Journal of Systematic Bacteriology* (now published by The Society for General Microbiology in England) the name(s) must be accepted and used. This is not, as stated by V. B. D. Skerman, the case (22). Names of plant pathogens are extremely important to national and international trade, scientists and others who ship cultures, and even funding agencies and organizations. The recent use of the proposed names *X. axonopodis pv. phaseoli* (for *X. campestris pv. phaseoli* or *X. phaseoli*) and *P. savastanoi pv. phaseolicola* (for *P. syringae pv. phaseolicola*) in some journal papers and in kits developed by some plant disease diagnostic companies (Viz. D-Genos kits distributed by AES Laboratories, Combourg, France) illustrates the type of confusion this problem is causing in use and in recognition of pathogen names.

**Pseudomonads.** Gardan et al. (7) proposed to change the name of *P. syringae pv. phaseolicola*, causal agent of halo blight of bean, and *P. syringae pv. glycinea*, causal agent of bacterial blight of soybeans, to *P. savastanoi pv. phaseolicola* and *P. savastanoi pv. glycinea*, respectively. Based on DNA similarity data and numerical analysis, these authors (7) proposed that *P. syringae pv. savastanoi* be elevated to the rank of species and that the other two highly regulated and widely known pathogens be renamed as *P. syringae pv. glycinea* and *P. syringae pv. phaseolicola* independently of host reaction. These results, together with previous results (14) showing that the type species, *X. campestris pv. campestris*, has DNA similarity values of only 26% or less with over 20 named pathovars including *vesicatoria, phaseoli, glycines, vignicola, poinsetticola, begoniae, manihotis, oryzicola, juglandis, carotae*, and *pelargonii*. Furthermore, Hildebrand et al. (14) reported that these pathovars showed DNA similarities to each other of less than 70%, except for *pvs. glycines, phaseoli,* and *vignicola*, which were 77 to 93% related. These results are different from those showing *pvs. glycines, vignicola*, and *phaseoli* to be indistinguishable from *pv. begoniae* by DNA similarities (30). For DNA similarity assays, a species is generally defined as having 70% or greater relatedness (35); therefore, any strain with a relatedness of less than 70% would be accepted as a different species. In contrast, Vauterin et al. (30) chose to use a relatedness of only 60% as their definition of a species. We prefer the widely accepted 70% value. Pathovars *vesicatoria, malvacearum, manihotis, oryzae, oryzicola, phaseoli, sojensis, translucens*, and *begoniae* were shown earlier to be differentiated quite easily from each other and from *X. campestris pv. campestris* on the basis of serology and membrane proteins (28). Within the work by Thaveechai and Schaad (28), the legends for their Figures 5 and 6 showing clear differences between these pathovars, including *X. campestris pv. phaseoli*, were mistakenly reversed by the typesetter. This error is easily overlooked by the casual reader.

We accept the reinstatement of *pv. oryzae* to the rank of species with the inclusion of *X. oryzae* as a pathovar of *X. oryzae* (27). The proposed *X. populii* (21) is accepted. Vauterin et al. (30) designated 20 DNA similarity groups among the xanthomonads and proposed that each group serve as a species. Several new epithets were proposed. However, the DNA similarity values of pathovars within several of the proposed species do not meet the definition of a species (24,35). We enthusiastically support the formal proposal to restore several pathovars to the rank of species including *X. cassavae* and *X. translucens* (Table 2). We see no reason to list *pvs. aberrans, armoraciae, campestris, barbareae, incanae*, and *raphani* as pathovars of *X. campestris*, because they already exist (4,38,40). Similarly, we do not agree with the transfer of the remaining pathovars of *X. campestris* to the species *X. axonopodis* (30).

The strength of the two proposals is that they include DNA similarity data on over 180 xanthomonad strains. However, interpretation of the DNA similarity data is difficult because details in the methods are lacking. Most importantly, it is not clear what strains were labeled to obtain the DNA binding values (%), which method was used for the assays (spectrophotometric or labeled DNA), which similarity assays were performed by the authors or which were compiled from literature, and no reciprocal tests were included. In either event, this required considerable effort. The results presented by Vauterin et al. (30) are generally in agreement with previous results (14) showing that the type species, *X. campestris pv. campestris*, has DNA similarity values of only 26% or less with over 20 named pathovars including *vesicatoria, phaseoli, glycines, vignicola, poinsetticola, begoniae, manihotis, oryzicola, juglandis, carotae*, and *pelargonii*. Furthermore, Hildebrand et al. (14) reported that these pathovars showed DNA similarities to each other of less than 70%, except for *pvs. glycines, phaseoli,* and *vignicola*, which were 77 to 93% related. These results are different from those showing *pvs. glycines, vignicola,* and *phaseoli* to be indistinguishable from *pv. begoniae* by DNA similarities (30). For DNA similarity assays, a species is generally defined as having 70% or greater relatedness (35); therefore, any strain with a relatedness of less than 70% would be accepted as a different species. In contrast, Vauterin et al. (30) chose to use a relatedness of only 60% as their definition of a species. We prefer the widely accepted 70% value. Pathovars *vesicatoria, malvacearum, manihotis, oryzae, oryzicola, phaseoli, sojensis, translucens*, and *begoniae* were shown earlier to be differentiated quite easily from each other and from *X. campestris pv. campestris* on the basis of serology and membrane proteins (28). Within the work by Thaveechai and Schaad (28), the legends for their Figures 5 and 6 showing clear differences between these pathovars, including *X. campestris pv. phaseoli*, were mistakenly reversed by the typesetter. This error is easily overlooked by the casual reader.

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In contrast to the slow growth of *X. axonopodis* on nutrient agar, these pathovars grow normally compared with *X. campestris*. These should remain in the type species *X. campestris* until adequate data are available as proposed in 1980 (4,38,39), or they should be placed into a new “repository” species, as discussed below. The temporary placement of these pathovars in another existing species epithet such as *X. axonopodis* only creates additional confusion.

We accept the elevation of *X. campestris* pv. *vesicatoria* type B strains to the rank of species (30). The type B strains clearly represent a separate taxon (25,30). However, the epithet *vesicatoria* should be retained for the type A strains, which represent those first described by Doidge in 1920 (3), following Rule 24b (23). Since the same epithet cannot be used for two different organisms (pathovar and species), according to Rule 12b (23), we suggest that the type B strains represented by those described as *exitiosa* by Gardiner and Kendrick in 1921 (10), be named *X. exitiosa* and the A strains be retained as *X. campestris* pv. *vesicatoria* until additional data are available.

Some other pathovars Vauterin et al. (30) proposed to elevate to the rank of species should not be elevated, as discussed below. To avoid unnecessary changing of names and resulting confusion, we concur, as suggested previously (4,38,39), that all pathovars of *X. campestris* be retained as pathovars until adequate data are available to elevate a particular pathovar to the rank of species or sub-species. We would prefer to remove all other pathovars from *X. campestris* as proposed by Vauterin et al. (30) and put them into another “holding” or “repository” species. (The artificial taxon, *X. phyllovora*, is discussed below.) However, changing names while waiting for appropriate data is premature and will cause additional confusion. Therefore, we recommend that any pathovar included in the 1980 List of Names (4) be retained until data are available to elevate it to the rank of species. When a pathovar is to be elevated, based upon appropriate data, the name of the oldest recognized pathovar included in the 1980 list of names (4) should be retained according to Rule 24b (23).

Based on DNA similarities determined by the S1 nuclease digestion technique (16), we agree with Vauterin et al. (30) in the elevation of pv.s. *cassavae*, *cucurbitae*, *pisi*, *vesicatoria* (type B or *exitiosa* group only, as discussed above), *hyacinthi*, and *translucens* (including pv.s. and f. spp. *translucens*, *undulosa*, *secalis*, *hordel*, *phleipratensis*, and *cerealis*) to the rank of species. However, the proposed *X. translucens* is a very heterogeneous species. For example, based on an experimental error of 11% (30), 10 of 23 strains tested had DNA similarity values of less than 67% to *X. translucens*. DNA similarity values ranged from lows of 58% for pv. *translucens* strain LMG 5259, 61% for the single strain of pv. *phleipratensis*, and 66% for pv. *cerealis* strain LMG 679 and *undulosa* strain LMG 892 to a high of 87% for pv. *undulosa* strain LMG 885. Furthermore, other DNA similarity data (G. H. Lacy, unpublished data) show that strains of pv.s. *phlei*, *arrhenatheri*, and *poeae* have less than 65% similarity to *X. translucens*. These could represent separate subspecies; however, until additional strains are studied, they should, as stated above, remain as pathovars of *X. campestris*. Similarly, the proposed species *X. melonis* and *X. theicola* (30) have not been well studied and should remain as pathovars of *X. campestris* until appropriate data are available. The new species epithets *bromi* and *sacchari* proposed (30) for two strains each of *X. campestris* pv. *graminis* and *X. albilineans*, respectively, should not be accepted until additional strains and data are included.

More problematic are the de novo epithets proposed by Vauterin et al. (30) to encompass strains related at the species level including *X. arboricola*, *X. codiaei* (poinsetticiella type B), *X. hororum*, and *X. vasicola*. We believe this to be a premature decision. The primary intent of the pathovar proposal presented by Young et al. (39) at the International Conference on Plant Pathogenic Bacteria in Angers, France, was to save the epithets of plant-pathogenic bacteria that had not been adequately described phenotypically and, therefore, destined to be left off the 1980 List of Names (4). Acceptance of this temporary infrasubspecific epithet meant that the species name was saved from further use. Furthermore, this meant the name could be easily revived once data became available rather than having to propose a new specific epithet, which could result in further confusion. J. M. Young stated at the 1978 Congress that “At present, use of the term pathovar is informal and not governed by any specific rules. Once established, it is most difficult to discontinue. It only creates additional confusion.”

For groups of pathovars found to be related at the species level, the consolidated species epithet reasonably should be derived by elevation of the earliest legitimately published pathovar epithet (4), according to Rule 24b (International Code of Nomenclature [23]). Further, creation of new names for long-standing pathogens of great economic importance will cause considerable uncertainty among government regulatory officials, seed companies, and scientists. With regard to the deposition of the epithets in the 1980 Approved List of Names, the following is stated (page 230 in literature citation 22): "The International Society for Plant Pathology is publishing, in the Review of Plant Pathology, a list of pathovars of species which appear in the Approved List of Names. Taxonomists...

TABLE 1. Summary of rejected and retained or suggested names

| Rejected names | Retained or suggested names
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| *Pseudomonas savastanoi* pvs. savastanoi, phaseolicola, and glycinea (Garden et al., 1997) | Retain as *P. savastanoi* and *P. syringae* pvs. phaseolicola and glycinea
| *Xanthomonas arboricola* (Vauterin et al., 1995), with pvs. corydina, juglandis, pruni, and poinsetticiella type C | Replace with *X. juglandis* pvs. juglandis, *corydina*, and *pruni*
| *X. axonopodis* (Starr and Garces, 1950), Vauterin et al., 1995, all proposed pathovars b | Retain *X. axonopodis*, but not the proposed pathovars
| *X. bronii* (Vauterin et al., 1995) | Retain as *X. campestris* pv. poinsetticiella type B
| *X. codiae* (Vauterin et al., 1995) | Replace with *X. hederae* pvs. hederae and *pelargonii* and retain *vitians* type B as *X. campestris* pathovar
| *X. hororum* (Vauterin et al., 1995), with pvs. hortorum, hederae, pelargonii, and vitians type B | Retain as *X. campestris* pv. *melonis* in Angers, France, was to save the epithets of plant-pathogenic bacteria that had not been adequately described phenotypically and, therefore, destined to be left off the 1980 List of Names (4). Acceptance of this temporary infrasubspecific epithet meant that the species name was saved from further use. Furthermore, this meant the name could be easily revived once data became available rather than having to propose a new specific epithet, which could result in further confusion. J. M. Young stated at the 1978 Congress that “At present, use of the term pathovar is informal and not governed by any specific rules. Once established, it is most difficult to discontinue. It only creates additional confusion.”

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a Suggested names are in underlined.
b The following proposed pathovars of *X. axonopodis* (30) should be retained as pathovars of *X. campestris* until sufficient data are available: *alfufae*, *baunhiae*, *begoniae*, *cajanii*, *cassavae* (type B), *cassiae*, *citri*, *clitoriae*, *coracanae*, *cyamopsidis*, *desmodii*, *desmodiigaentici*, *desmodiiligualisi*, *desmodirotundifoli*, *dieffenbachiae*, *erythrinae*, *glesnices*, *lespedezae*, *malvacarum*, *manihotis*, *patelli*, *phasedii*, *phyllanthi*, *poinsetticiella* (type A), *rhynchosiae*, *ricini*, *sesbaniae*, *tamarindii*, *vaccarum* (type A), *vesicatoria* (type A), *vignaeradiatae*, *vignicola*, and *vittians* (type A).

c All type A strains of pv. *vesicatoria*, including the type strain, should be retained in *X. campestris*.
are urged to consult this list before proposing new species within the relevant genera.” Referring to rejected names, P. H. A. Sneath stated (page XXXIX in literature citation 23) “…but clearly the smooth operation of the provisions for revised names requires the cooperation of bacteriologists in observing recommendations such as those made by pathologists.” Plant bacteriologists attending the Angers meeting clearly were concerned that long-used names for pathogens of economic importance might be lost and never revived. The acceptance of the “pathovar” proposal meant that the names of a large number of economically important pathogens would be saved and that, when appropriate data became available, the organism would be reevaluated to the rank of species. In cases in which two or more pathovars were shown to be related at the species level, the oldest epithet would be used for the species name according to the Rules of Nomenclature (23). The International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria and the Approved List of Bacterial Names emphasized the need for cooperation between taxonomists and plant pathologists in the whole process. Creating new species epithets for highly regulated pathogens such as X. citri and X. phaseoli could cause serious disruption of international trade. The International Code specifically urges restraint in name changes to minimize confusion (23). Several additional proposed species (30) are discussed below.

We cannot recommend use of the proposed name of X. hortorum for regrouping pvs. pelargonii, hederae, and vitians type B (described in 1923, 1920, and 1918, respectively), because the name is not derived from the earliest legitimate pathovar epithet and the usage of the pathovar epithet vitians in more than one taxonomic position is confusing. Similarly, X. arboricola (30), a newly proposed epithet to encompass X. arboricola for pvs. corylina and juglandis and some strains of pv. pruni (described in 1940, 1901, and 1903, respectively), is rejected because the name, not derived from the earliest legitimate epithet, causes confusion. We accept the elevation of these pathovars to the rank of species. However, we instead recommend use of the name X. juglandis for these pathovars, since it was the first of the three taxa described (Rule 24a of the Code [23]).

Elevation of pvs. vasculorum type B and holicola to a single species, X. vasicola, is rejected because the epithet X. vasicola is not derived from the pathovars making it up. Also, these pathovars apparently lack enough common DNA similarity (70%) to belong in the same taxon (G. H. Lacy, unpublished data). These organisms should be retained as pathovars of X. campestris until appropriate data are available.

The proposal for the new species epithet X. codiaeii (30), conceived in a manner more consistent with pathology literature, to include strains of pv. poinsettiiicola type B strains causing disease on crotons (Codiaeum variegatum) is more difficult to interpret. X. campestris pv. poinsettiiicola likely includes xanthomonads with similar host reactions but diverse phylogenetic origins similar to the X. vasculorum types A and B discussed above. Unpublished DNA similarity assays (G. H. Lacy, unpublished data) support Vauterin et al.’s (30) observation of an intermediate level relatedness of the type strain of pv. poinsettiiicola (ATCC 11643), presumably type A, to pv. axonopodis (Fig. 1, X. codiaeii, in literature citation 30). However, comparing metabolic activities (2 strains versus 99 strains; Table 2 in literature citation 30), only two reactions (with alpha-D-lactose and beta-methyl-D-glucosidase) were different between the two groups representing pv. poinsettiiicola types A and B. Therefore, while sympathetic to the concept that pv. poinsettiiicola type B strains may constitute a phylogenetic taxon, we believe that more data, including results of reciprocal and pairwise DNA similarity assays, are needed to establish a new species. It would also be helpful to know if the host ranges of types A and B overlap or are separate. Therefore, in the interim, we recommend that strains representing pv. poinsettiiicola types A and B remain as pathovars of X. campestris.

We cannot accept the reclassification proposal of Vauterin et al. (30) to use X. axonopodis, originally described in 1950 (26), as repository of some 35 pathovars including begoniae, citri, dieffenbachiae, malvacearum, phaseoli, prunii, and vasculorum (described in 1934, 1915, 1938, 1901, 1897, 1903, and 1893, respectively). Vauterin et al. (30) reported a range of 62 to 92% in DNA similarities with a standard error of 15% (47 to 77%) within this axonopodis group. Of the two strains of pv. axonopodis tested, the type strain had a mean DNA similarity value of only 66% (±15) to others in the group. Pathovar axonopodis only shares DNA similarity of about 37% (G. H. Lacy, unpublished data) with the pathovars currently listed in the axonopodis group. In fact, by DNA similarities (G. H. Lacy, unpublished data), this large interrelated group may contain at least five species-level groups centered on pvs. begoniae, dieffenbachiae, malvacearum, pruni, and vasculorum type A. The type strain for X. axonopodis (ATCC 19312) shares more than 80% DNA similarity (G. H. Lacy, unpublished data) with the type strain of X. vasculorum (ATCC 35938, similar to type A strains of Vauterin et al. [30]). Both bacteria cause disease in sugarcane and Panicum spp., but they do not share all hosts. According to Rule 24a and b of the International Code of Nomen-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accepted namesa</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Xanthomonas albilineaeas (Ashby, 1929)</td>
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<tr>
<td>X. axonopodis (Starr and Garces, 1950)</td>
<td>Pathovars listed belowb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. campestris (Pammel, 1895), Dowson, 1939</td>
<td>Type A strains only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. cassavae (ex Wiehe and Dowson, 1953), Vauterin et al., 1995</td>
<td>Includes pvs. vesicatoria type B strainsc</td>
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<tr>
<td>X. cucurbitae (ex Bryon, 1926), Vauterin et al., 1995</td>
<td>Includes pvs. hederae and pelargonii</td>
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<tr>
<td>X. exitialia (Gardner and Kendrick, 1921), this paper</td>
<td>Including pvs. juglandis, corylina, and prunii</td>
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<td>X. fragariae (Kennedy and King, 1962)</td>
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<tr>
<td>X. hederae (Arnaud, 1920), this paper</td>
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<td>X. hyacinthi (Wakker, 1883), Vauterin et al., 1995</td>
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<td>X. juglandis (Pierce, 1901), this paper</td>
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<td>X. oryzae (Ishiyama, 1921), Swings et al., 1991, with pvs. oryzae and oryzicola</td>
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<td>X. pisi (ex Goto and Okabe, 1958), Vauterin et al., 1995</td>
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<td>X. populi (Ride and Ride, 1992)</td>
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<tr>
<td>X. translucens (ex Jones et al., 1917), Vauterin et al., 1995</td>
<td>Including proposed pvs. translucens, cerealis, hordei, secalis, and undulosa4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Original species reference in the work by Young et al. (40).
b Including pvs. alfalfae, arnhenutheri, baehiniae, begoniae, cajani, carotae, cassavae (type B), cassiae, citri, eltoriae, cororacae, cyamopsisis, desmodis, desmodigiangetici, desmodilassiflori, desmodirotundifolfii, dieffenbachiae, erythrinae, glycine, graminis, holicola, lespedezae, malvacearum, munihotis, melonis, normugulans, patelli, phaseoli, phlei, phlegrafatensis, phyllanthi, poae, poinsettiiicola (types A and B), rhychosias, ricini, sesbaniae, tamarindii, taraxaci, vasculorum (types A and B), vesicatoria (type A), vignaeadiutiae, vignicola, and vitians. Additional pathovars in the work by Young et al. (40).
c Because the epithet vesicatoria must be maintained for the earlier described type A strains (3), it can not be used for the type B strains. The epithet exitiosa, as used in 1921 (10), is proposed. The type A strains are maintained as X. campestris pv. vesicatoria.
d Not enough data available to recognize as distinct species.

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clature of Bacteria (23), the oldest legitimate epithet should be retained when two or more taxa of the same rank are united. Because X. vasculorum was published first (1893), we suggest that these two bacteria be renamed as pathovars of X. vascularorum (i.e., X. vascularorum pvs. vascularorum and axonopodis). However, since the epithet vascularorum is maintained for type B strains of X. campestris, it cannot be used as a species epithet (type A strains) according to Rule 12b. Therefore, we recommend that both type A and B strains of X. vascularorum be retained as pathovars of X. campestris until their taxonomy is clarified. We reject the axonopodis group as constituted (30) and, to avoid confusion in the literature, we recommend retaining the other 33 pathovars as pathovars of X. campestris until additional phylogenetic information has been published clarifying their interrelationships or to place them into a new “repository” species.

Because of their economic and regulatory importance, special mention must be made of X. campestris pvs. citri and phaseoli. We reject, for the reasons stated above, inclusion of these bacteria as pathovars of X. axonopodis (30). However, we must consider carefully the possibility that these pathovars deserve reinstatement to the species level based upon the information currently available (6,11,12,33). Van der Mooter and Swings (29) and Vauterin et al. (33) have provided additional phenotypic data since Young et al. (37) rejected the proposal of Gabriel et al. (6) to reinstate these pathovars as species. The phenotypic data of Van der Mooter and Swings (29) did not discriminate between pvs. citri and phaseoli, grouping both pathovars into a single phenon including X. campestris. Analyses of fatty acids and sodium dodecyl sulfate-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis protein profiles showed clear differences among groups of xanthomonads causing citrus disease but did not indicate the position of the citrus pathogens in relation to other xanthomonads including pv. phaseoli (33). Genomic fingerprinting (11), restriction fragment length polymorphism analyses (12), and DNA similarity studies (33) of citrus pathogens also supported differences among citrus pathogens but, likewise, did not address relatedness to other xanthomonads or pv. phaseoli. Gabriel et al. (6), using nonpairwise hybridizations of plasmid probes to elecrophoresed restriction endonuclease digests of genomic DNA, detected only about 20% similarity between pv. citri and pv. campestris, malvacearum, or phaseoli. However, Egel et al. (5) showed by pairwise DNA similarity assays that while pv. citri shares less than 50% similarity with pv. phaseoli, it has over 90% DNA similarity with pv. malvacearum. The results of Egel et al. (5) are confirmed in the unpublished data of G. H. Lacey. Although significant new knowledge about pvs. citri and phaseoli have been obtained, lack of similar information about closely related groups makes it possible that premature reinstatement may lead to later confusion should high levels of DNA similarity be discovered with other xanthomonads, especially those with precedence in the literature (i.e., pv. malvacearum). Therefore, following the accepted species definition based on DNA similarity analyses (24,35) and Rule 24 of the International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria (23), we propose that pvs. citri and phaseoli remain temporarily as pathovars of X. campestris until more DNA similarity information is available concerning their relationship to X. campestris and other xanthomonads.

Xanthomonads of uncertain classification. Confusion on a large scale may potentially be caused by renaming xanthomonads to more accurately approximate their phylogenetic relationships. This confusion results when some xanthomonads are renamed on the basis of new information, while others are left behind in their current classifications, usually as pathovars of X. campestris, due to insufficient information. The result is that pathovars of X. campestris, rather than reflecting actual phylogenetic relationships also include xanthomonads placed in that group only because of lack of information. One suggestion is to correct this problem for pathologists by creating an artificial neutral taxon as a repository for all pathovars that are inadequately described. This taxon should be reserved for current and future xanthomonads whose descriptions are inadequate for further classification but cause important plant diseases. Possibly, a name such as X. phyllovora, carrying no indication of host specificity, may be useful for this “temporary” file. An artificial taxon may be useful for several to many years, until enough information has been gathered that all the current pathovars of X. campestris are moved into phylogenetically acceptable taxa. Such epithets may also have long-term usefulness for newly discovered xanthomonads that have not yet been described adequately for more precise identification. While the former suggestion is interesting, we seek comment from other pathologists on the concept. If acceptable, a brief description of X. phyllovora could be published in the International Journal of Systematic Bacteriology.

Summary. A summary of the names that we propose be rejected and accepted is presented in Tables 1 and 2, respectively. We point out that the newly suggested names such as X. exitiosa, X. hederea, and X. juglandis are suggestions and not formal proposals. A formal proposal must be published in the International Journal of Systematic Bacteriology. These recommendations have been discussed and approved by the Bacteriology Committee of APS. We, therefore, recommend to the editors of Phytopathology, Plant Disease, Molecular Plant-Microbe Interactions, and APS Press that authors be advised to follow these recommendations, until further data are forthcoming and evaluated. These choices are generally based upon the date of the original description following Rules 23a, 24a and b, and 26a of Section 5 (Priority and Publication of Names) of the International Code of Nomenclature (23).

LITERATURE CITED


