

## Bibliography

Frodin, D.G. (1990) Studies in *Schefflera* (Araliaceae). IV. The identity of *Vitis heptaphylla* L., a long-misplaced Linnaean ivy tree. *Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society* 104: 309-324.

## SWIMS tidings....



This is the start of a new section to *Porcupine!* in which we shall provide a regular update on activities at SWIMS (Swire Institute of Marine Science). As most of you may know there have been some pretty major changes at SWIMS over the last few months. The Institute has, thanks to the generosity of The Swire Group and matching funds from the University, undergone an extensive refurbishment. This is going hand-in-hand with a change in staff and a new influx of postgraduates.

The renovation has involved connecting the laboratory, and most importantly for all our residents, the residence block to the mains freshwater supply. Within the Institute we have extensively upgraded the aquarium and seawater system. Now, thanks to a consultants report, we have a much-improved water supply, having removed the high sediment loads which were a constant problem. The aquarium has been gutted and a more flexible system installed including separate rooms for controlled experimental work. The main laboratory has been totally renovated and redesigned to provide greater working space per student, as well as to rationalize the central facilities such as the chemical stores, ovens, freezers etc. This has also freed up the old small laboratory, now remodelled as a molecular/analytical facility. Along with these major renovations, SWIMS has had a face-lift, with a new reception area and external façade, and further improvements in the seminar room. More good news for our resident postgrads is that we have been able to renovate the old residence block – and also plan to install Broadband connections.

In line with the renovation there has also been a change of personnel as Prof Morton has retired and left Hong Kong. Drs Kenny Leung and Cynthia Yau have just been appointed as

new Assistant Professors who join Dr Benny Chan as part of the research team at SWIMS. These staff are joined by a number of new (and not so new) postgraduates who are now able to either start, or return to, their work at SWIMS following the renovations. With the new facilities and the fresh start we plan to report on the research and other activities in future issues of *Porcupine!*

The new renovations are nearing completion. The official university opening will take place sometime in late October – dependent on the availability of senior members of The Swire Group and HKUs Vice Chancellor. There will, however, soon be an “unofficial opening” to thank everyone for their help and support over the last year or so and to celebrate the new SWIMS with friends and colleagues at DEB. I hope many *Porcupine!* readers will be able to attend both the formal and informal meetings that we plan at SWIMS over the next year and .... onwards into the future...!

Gray A. Williams  
Hon. Director SWIMS

## DIVERSITY AT A GLANCE

This column aims to introduce interesting species of Hong Kong flora and fauna that might be encountered during fieldwork. Distinctive physical characteristics and some interesting ecological facts are included for each example.

Editors : Jacqueline Weir ([jesweir@hkusua.hku.hk](mailto:jesweir@hkusua.hku.hk)) and  
David Poon ([dynpoon@graduate.hku.hk](mailto:dynpoon@graduate.hku.hk))

### “*Desmos*” by Ada Ng

*Desmos* Lour. is a small genus in the pantropical plant family Annonaceae. This genus comprises about 25-30 species. They are either climbers or scandent shrubs that often have leaves that are glaucous below. Some species have edible fruits while some are commonly used as folk medicines in Asian countries.

One *Desmos* species, *D. chinensis*, is found in Hong Kong. It is a spreading shrub in shady places and may develop into a higher climber. This species is widespread in Asia and northern Australia. The plants are commonly found in thickets and hedges in Victoria Peak, Pokfulam Country Park, Tai Mo Shan, Tai Po Kau, Sai Kung, Lantau Island, Lamma Island etc. The flowers open between April and July and fruit can be observed from June to March of the following year.

### Phenology

The solitary flower is pendent on a pedicel and often terminal or supra-axillary. Each flower consists of three sepals and six valvate petals in two whorls. The outer three petals are longer