



A tribute to Father Erwin Schmutz (1932–2022)

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Fig. 1 Father Erwin Schmutz in the Nunang area in the 1970s (left) and during his Diamond Jubilee in 2018 (right). Photos were modified from Trainor & Verbelen (2016) (left) and SVD Australia (2022) (right).

Father Erwin Schmutz, a priest, missionary, medical professional, and botanist, passed away on 5 October 2022 at the SVD Elderly Home in Sydney, Australia (Sydney Morning Herald 2022). We honour the life and lasting impact of a distinguished botanist, who devoted his life to the collection of numerous plant specimens.

Father Erwin Schmutz was born in 1932 in Ingolstadt, along the Donau River in Bavaria, Germany (SVD Australia 2022). After completing junior high school, he briefly studied chemistry and, initially, started working as a druggist. However, he studied theology from 1956 to 1962 (Van Steenis-Kruseman 1974), and soon joined the Society of the Divine Word (originally in Latin: *Societas Verbi Divini*, abbreviated as SVD). He entered the St. Augustine Seminary in Germany and made his first profession in May 1958 (SVD Australia 2022).

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In 1963, he embarked on an inspiring mission as a Steyler Missionary, venturing to the captivating island of Flores in Indonesia's Lesser Sunda Islands (Van Steenis-Kruseman 1974, Schmutz 1976). For approximately 30 years, he worked as a missionary in Indonesia, particularly in the Nunang Parish, near Lake Sano Nggoang in West Flores (Perkasa 2022, Berkelana 2023), and later served as a chaplain in the German Air Force before arriving at the SVD AUS (Australian) Province, where he became a chaplain in the German community in Adelaide for many years (SVD Australia 2022).

Through his relentless pursuit of knowledge and exploration, he fostered a strong bond with the Rijksherbarium (Netherlands Herbarium) of Leiden University in the Netherlands (now part of Naturalis Biodiversity Center), which served as a gateway for sharing his remarkable findings and discoveries. His contributions were of such significance that numerous plants, previously unknown to science, now bear his name.

The dedicated efforts of Father Erwin Schmutz (1978–1980) have yielded exceptional results in documenting the Flora of

Manggarai, making it one of the most comprehensively studied regions in the Nusa Tenggara area, resulting, for example, in the multi-volume 'Die Flora der Manggarai' (Schmutz 1979). Adhering to standardized collection protocols, he meticulously gathered herbarium specimens in the district, ensuring their preservation at Herbarium Bogoriense (BO) and Naturalis Biodiversity Center (L) (Pfeiffer & Uril 2003).

Initially, Schmutz established a private herbarium consisting solely of ferns. Later, 1965–1967, the collection expanded to include phanerogams and mosses. Each specimen has at least one duplicate intended for L, preserved as of 1970 (Van Steenis-Kruseman 1974). Touw (1992) reported that the mosses collected by Father Erwin Schmutz amount to 371 specimens, covering 168 species. They were collected in many locations in the Manggarai district of west Flores. The specimens were stored in BO and L (Touw 1992). His moss collection significantly contributed to our knowledge of the diversity of moss species in the Lesser Sunda Islands.

By 1974, Schmutz's herbarium comprised 3200 specimens (Van Steenis-Kruseman 1974). Until his death, Father Erwin Schmutz had collected up to 5355 specimen sheets of vascular plants stored at L, which were collected at least from 1952 to 2005. Out of the 5355 specimen sheets, the majority (5304 sheets or 99 %) originated from Indonesia (particularly from the Lesser Sunda Islands), with a small number collected from Nepal (9 sheets), the Philippines (9 sheets), Malaysia (4 sheets), Papua New Guinea (3 sheets), Portugal (1 sheet), and the origins of the remaining few are unknown.

In November 1971 and January 1976, Schmutz gathered bamboo specimens (*Poaceae*) from Nunang, Manggarai, Flores, which were then sent to the bamboo expert in BO, Soejatmi Dransfield. Dransfield later identified those specimens as a new species, *Nastus schmutzii* S.Dransf. (Dransfield 1980), presently called *Chloothamnus schmutzii* (S.Dransf.) Widjaja (Widjaja & Wong 2016, Damayanto et al. 2020). In September 2002, Father Erwin Schmutz discovered a potentially new taxon on Kangaroo Island, Australia, and Lowrie & Conran (2008) described it as *Drosera schmutzii* Lowrie & Conran (*Droseraceae*).

Schmutz explored various areas in the Lesser Sunda Islands to study their flora. His journey began in Flores, specifically in West Manggarai, starting from 1964. In his publication (Schmutz 1976), he documented his extensive exploration of the flora in Ruteng, West Manggarai, in collaboration with Prof.dr. A.J.G.H. Kostermans. He then embarked on a trip to Timor from June to August 1968, visiting locations such as Atapupu, Atambua, Mota Buik (a river between Atambua and Nenuk Lalina), Lahurus, Mt. Lakaan, Mota Oe, Lalian Nenuk, Mota Telau, Kefamenanu, Tua Mese, Mt. Mutis, Soe, Nikiniki, Kupang, and Rote Island. Later on, he flew to Maumere in Central Flores, as well as Lomblem (Lembata Island), before returning to West Flores (Van Steenis-Kruseman 1974).

Schmutz, together with Father J.A.J. Verheijen, also devoted much time to ornithological investigations in Flores (Mees 2006, Trainor & Verbelen 2016, Meijer et al. 2017). Additionally, his passion for geology was evident as he possessed an extensive understanding of the stones he encountered, along with their intricate geological histories. He was an accomplished and passionate allround field naturalist interested in the flora, fauna and geology of Indonesia and South Australia (Lowrie & Conran 2008).

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EPONYMY OF ERWIN SCHMUTZ

<i>Actinidiaceae</i>	<i>Saurauia schmutzii</i> Hoogland
<i>Droseraceae</i>	<i>Drosera schmutzii</i> Lowrie & Conran
<i>Ebenaceae</i>	<i>Diospyros schmutzii</i> Kosterm.
<i>Elaeocarpaceae</i>	<i>Elaeocarpus schmutzii</i> Weibel
<i>Fabaceae</i>	<i>Mucuna schmutzii</i> Wiriad. (synonym of <i>M. platyphylla</i> A.Gray)
	<i>Sympetalandra schmutzii</i> Steenis
<i>Phyllanthaceae</i>	<i>Antidesma leptocladum</i> Tul. var. <i>schmutzii</i> Airy Shaw (synonym of <i>A. montanum</i> Blume var. <i>montanum</i>)
<i>Poaceae</i>	<i>Chloothamnus schmutzii</i> (S.Dransf.) Widjaja (basionym <i>Nastus schmutzii</i> S.Dransf.)
<i>Polypodiaceae</i>	<i>Tectaria schmutzii</i> Holttum
<i>Rubiaceae</i>	<i>Achilleanthus schmutzii</i> (M.E.Jansen) J.G.Chavez (basionym <i>Guettardella schmutzii</i> M.E.Jansen, synonym <i>Antirhea schmutzii</i> (M.E.Jansen) Chaw)

PUBLICATIONS BY FATHER ERWIN SCHMUTZ

1976

- An amateur botanist on the Lesser Sunda Islands. *Flora Malesiana Bulletin* 29: 2605–2609.

1979

- *Die Flora der Manggarai*, Heft 1-5. Societas Verbi Divini, Ruteng.