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Pseudopanax davidii

[Synonyms : *Metapanax davidii*]

LANCEWOOD is an evergreen shrub or tree. Native to central and western China, and to northern Vietnam, it has small, greenish-yellow flowers.

Davidii commemorates a French Lazarist missionary and naturalist, Père Armand David (1826-1900). After his ordination in 1862 he was eventually sent to Beijing and is said to have been rigorous in maintaining his religious duties and obeying the Order's rules. Yet despite these demands he managed to find time for his interest in zoology, botany, geology and palaeontology and the Paris botanical garden (Jardin des Plantes) eventually commissioned him to make journeys of discovery on their behalf. His specimens included over 1000 animals, birds and plants, a significant number of which were unknown to Europeans at that time and his travels took him as far afield from the Chinese capital as Mongolia, Tibet and central China (as well as to the north of China and to the western provinces). The most striking of his zoological discoveries for the non-naturalist were probably the giant panda and Père David's deer. Authorities note that his botanical specimens included new species of about 40 of the *Primulae* genus, over that number of gentians and at least 52 new rhododendrons. This was also one of the species he discovered.