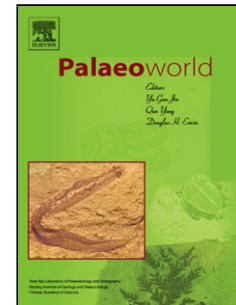


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***Mahonia* fossils from the Oligocene of South China: Taxonomic and biogeographic implications**

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Abstract

Mahonia is a genus with an East Asia-North America disjunct distribution today. Although *Mahonia* has a rich fossil record in North America dating back from Eocene to Miocene and some Oligocene to Pleistocene fossils from Europe, few fossils have been reported from East Asia. Here, three compressed fossil leaflets are described as a new species *Mahonia ningmingensis* Hu et Chen n. sp. from the Oligocene Ningming Formation in Guangxi, South China. This new fossil species shows leaf architectural characters of Group Orientales and has similarity with extant *Mahonia bodinieri*, *M. bealei*, *M. breviracema*, and *M. nittens*. The leaf fossils described here represent the oldest records and lowest latitude occurrence of *Mahonia* in East Asia and reveal that the Group Orientales already existed in East Asia at least in the Oligocene. This record extends the stratigraphic range of *Mahonia* in East Asia and provides evidence for the hypothesis that migration of *Mahonia* between North America and East Asia might have taken place over both the North Atlantic Land Bridge and Bering Land Bridge.

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