Saxifraga grisebachii versus S. federici-augusti

Saxifraga grisebachii vs. S. federici-augusti

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The name Saxifraga grisebachii Deg. et Dörfl. 1897 should for reasons of priority be replaced by the older name S. federici-augusti Biasol. 1841. This species includes two subspecies, S. federici-augusti subsp. federici-augusti and S. federici-augusti subsp. grisebachii (Deg. et Dörfl.) Byam-Grounds, Horný et Soják comb. nova.

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Webb (1964) included in the Saxifraga porophylla group three species. (1) The true S. porophylla Bertol. in Desv. with oblanceolate, 2.5–3.5 mm wide leaves is restricted to Italy. (2) S. sempervivum C. Koch, characterized particularly by narrow (1–3 mm), linear or linear oblong leaves, is distributed from Montenegro to Asia Minor. (3) S. grisebachii Deg. et Dörfl., possessing wide (4–7 mm), large spatulate leaves occurs from Montenegro to northern Greece. This conception has been recognized by recent botanists and confirmed by us from living material derived from nature and grown under garden conditions.

Saxifraga grisebachii is not uniform in its area. The plants from the western part have larger petals and longer filaments than those from the east. The western plants were originally described as S. porophylla var. montenegrina (Hal. et Bald.) ex Engl. et Irmsch. Micevski et Mayer (1970) evaluated them as a subspecies of S. grisebachii; we agree with this conclusion. The shape and size of the leaves, length of the flowering stem and number of flowers per stem definitely show them to appertain to S. grisebachii. At the same time definable distinguishing features of both taxa together with geographic areas which do not overlap prove that the rank of subspecies is thoroughly justifiable.

Micevski et Mayer (1970) did not take into account the existence of the name S. federici-augusti. Our study of Biasolletto’s paper shows that Saxifraga federici-augusti Biasol. 1841 is, according to the original description and figure (as well as the classical locality), undoubtedly identical with S. grisebachii Deg. et Dörfl. 1897 subsp. montenegrina (Hal. et Bald. ex Engl. et Irmsch. 1919) Micevski et Mayer 1970. It is therefore for reasons of priority necessary to replace the hitherto used name S. grisebachii by the older valid name S. federici-augusti and, at the same time, to change the names of both subspecies.

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Saxifraga federici-augusti subsp. federici-augusti (= previously S. grisebachii subsp. montenegrina) grows in Montenegro, in north and central Albania and western Macedonia and is characterized by petals 2–2.5 × 1–1.5 mm and filaments 2–2.5 times longer than anthers. S. federici-augusti subsp. grisebachii (DEGEN et DÖRFLER) BYAM-GROUNDS, HORNÝ et SOJÁK comb. nova (Bas.: S. grisebachii DEGEN et DÖRFLER, Denkschr. Akad. Wiss. Math.-Nat. Kl., Wien, 64 : 721, 1897) is distributed in central and S. Macedonia, E. Albania and in N. Greece and is characterized by petals 1.5–2 × 1 mm and filaments in length equal to or slightly shorter than anthers.

The species name S. grisebachii could be preserved only if it were reliably proved that S. federici-augusti subsp. federici-augusti represents an independent species, different from S. federici-augusti subsp. grisebachii. In this paper, however, we fully accept the classification as given by MICEVSKI et MAYER (1970) based on careful study of both taxa in nature.

It is remarkable that S. federici-augusti, although faithfully described and figured, was incorrectly interpreted and used as a synonym of different species by later authors. For example ENGLER et IRSCHER (1919) adopted it as a synonym of S. porophylla var. normalis TERRACC. (= var. euporophylla ENGL. et IRSCH. in ENGL.) which they reported from Italy but mentioned as also observed in Montenegro. Considering that they quoted the relevant herbarium specimens it is evident that the differences between S. porophylla and S. grisebachii were not clear to them. Subsequent authors also failed to pay due regard to the original paper by BIASOLETTO (1841) as is evident from the nomenclature employed. WEBB (1964 : 457) gave S. federici-augusti incorrectly as a synonym of S. sempervivum, while placing S. porophylla var. montenegrina, which is identical with S. federici-augusti, into synonymy of S. grisebachii (1964 : 379).

Even more confusing is the use of the name S. federici-augusti (or federici-augusti, friderici-augusti) in the gardening literature. At the beginning of the century this name was most frequently used for S. stribrnyi (VELEN.) PODP., mainly by F. Sündermann and in deference to his authority by several British authors (e.g. Irving et Malby, Pritchard). More recent authors (e.g. CHITTENDEN 1956) interpreted this name as a binomial for supposed hybrids of S. media × S. porophylla.

SOUHRN

Jméno Saxifraga grisebachii Deg. et Dörfl. 1897 je nutno z důvodu priority nahradit jménem S. federici-augusti BIASOL. 1841. Tento druh má dvě subspecie, S. f.-a. subsp. federici-augusti a S. f.-a. subsp. grisebachii (Deg. et Dörfl.) BYAM-GROUNDS, HORNÝ et SOJÁK comb. n.

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