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A NOTE ON PELLETIERA ST. HIL. (PRIMULACEAE) IN MACARONESIA

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ABSTRACT. *Pelletiera wildpretii* Valdés is reported for the first time from La Palma, Canary Islands.

SUMÁRIO. *Pelletiera wildpretii* Valdés é assinalada pela primeira vez para La Palma, Ilhas Canárias.

The genus *Pelletiera* includes two species: *P. serpyllifolia* (Poiret) Webb & Berthel. from South America and *P. wildpretii* Valdés from Macaronesia. The latter was described by Valdés (1980) after he observed that certain plants from the Canary Islands and the Salvage Islands, previously identified as *Asterolinon linum-stellatum* (L.) Duby, had, in fact, flowers and fruits characteristic of the genus *Pelletiera* (i.e. corolla comprising three free petals, an androecium reduced to three stamens inserted on the corolla segments, and a trivalved capsule), but differed sufficiently from the existing species of *Pelletiera* to justify recognition as a separate taxon.

With the similarity in general habit and appearance between *Asterolinon linum-stellatum* and *Pelletiera wildpretii*, it is hardly surprising that the former, a more widespread and well-known species, has often been recorded in error. Both taxa occur in the Canary Islands, but only *P. wildpretii* is known from the Salvage Islands. In 1872 Lowe noted the occurrence

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of *A. linum-stellatum* from the Salvage Islands in his *Manual flora of Madeira*, but examination of the specimens in Lowe's herbarium clearly shows them to be *P. wildpretii*.

Whilst examining Macaronesian specimens for the forthcoming 'Flora of Madeira', an additional Lowe specimen of *P. wildpretii*, plus two other collections, were discovered from the island of La Palma, housed in the herbarium at K. Previously this species was only recorded from the Canary Islands of Gran Canaria, Hierro, Tenerife, and Fuerteventura (Hansen & Sunding, 1985). In addition it was noted that, whilst agreeing with the description given by Valdés in most respects, the capsules on two of the La Palma specimens consistently differed by dehiscing with four equal valves, instead of the usual three. Further investigations revealed that the shape and size of the corolla segments on these specimens varied much more than had been previously suggested for this species and individual flowers contained three, four or even five stamens (five being the usual number of stamens for the Primulaceae). This variation was not seen on any other Macaronesian specimens examined or on specimens of *Pelletiera serpyllifolia* from South America. A description of *P. wildpretii* is given below to include this and other variation observed.

***Pelletiera wildpretii* Valdés, *Candollea* 35(2): 645 (1980)**

P. serpyllifolia (Poiret) Webb & Berthel., *Phytograph. Canar.* 3(2):173 (1845), quoad descr.

Glabrous annual. Stem (3.5-)6-16 cm, erect, branched from the base or sometimes simple. Leaves opposite, sessile, 4-14 x 1-3.5 mm, linear-elliptic to oblanceolate, acute to subobtusate, sometimes mucronulate, attenuate, usually thin and clearly reticulately-veined. Flowers solitary in leaf-axils, minute. Pedicels up to 3.5 mm in flower, patent; up to 4 mm in fruit, recurved. Calyx-lobes 1.3-2.5(-3) x 0.2-0.6 mm, linear-lanceolate, acuminate, narrowly scarious. Corolla white, with three unequal segments; segments c. 0.6-0.8 mm long, glandular; one obovate-spatulate, obtuse, with a single stamen attached; the second similar or, more usually, much broader, emarginate or bifid c. 1/2-2/3 the length, with either one or two stamens attached; the third also broad, deeply bifid c. 2/3 of the length, with one or two stamens attached. Stamens 3-5; filaments attached to segments c. 1/3-1/2 way from base, shorter than to about equalling corolla margin. Capsule 1-1.8 mm diameter, globose, dehiscing by 3-4 valves, 2-3(-4)-seeded. Seeds 0.9-1.2 x 0.7-0.9 mm, dark brown, compressed suborbicular, dorso-ventrally asymmetrical, dorsal face with central, sunken hilum surrounded by radiating ridges; ventral face convex, alveolate.

Distribution: Canary Islands (Fuerteventura, Gran Canaria, Hierro, La Palma, and Tenerife); SALVAGE ISLANDS (Selvagem Grande).

Fl. & Fr.: March - June.

Material examined

CANARY ISLANDS: *La Palma*, plentiful by the mule track from S. Cruz to the Cumbre Mere in the laurel region, 8.v.1901, *Murray & Bornmüller s. n.* (K); *La Palma*, between Cumbre Vieja and Santa Cruz, c. 3500 ft, 15.vi.1913, *Sprague & Hutchinson 513* (K); *La Palma*, Cumbre on Cam. Nuevo to La Banda, 12.vi.1858, *Lowe P. 340* (K); *Hierro*, El Golfo, *Lowe s. n.* (BM, K); *Tenerife*, in arenosis Bco. de Badajoz, 5.iii.1845, *Bourgeau 946* (CGE); In Canaria, *Webb s. n.* (K). SALVAGE ISLANDS: *Selvagem Grande*, 1866, *Paiva s. n.* Herb. Lowe (BM); *Selvagem Grande*; 1865, *Noronha s. n.* Herb. Lowe (K); *Selvagem Grande*; On plateau, 15.iii.1985, *Biscoito s. n.* (BM).

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