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**Taxonomic note on some Italian Bearded Irises: *Iris relictata* Colas. nom. nov. and *Iris bicapitata* Colas. sp. nov.**

**Abstract**

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The difficulties in the subdivision of infrageneric taxa in *Iris* L. have created great taxonomic problems even at the level of nomenclatural and taxonomic synonymies.

The cases of *I. suaveolens* (N. Terracc.) N. Terracc. ex A. Terracc. and *I. biflora* L. sensu Petagna are here analysed. Then, *I. relictata* Colas. nom. nov. and *I. bicapitata* sp. nov. are proposed.

**Introduction**

The genus *Iris* L. shows notable variation in different classifications of super-specific taxa (Linnaeus 1753, Dykes 1913, Lawrence 1953, Rodionenko 1961, Mathew 1981), so much that some of them have been removed from it and elevated to the rank of new genera in their own right (Rodionenko 1961).

At specific and subspecific level, the Italian Bearded Irises (subgenus *Iris* Section *Iris*, according to Mathew 1981), present several both systematic and nomenclatural problems. Regarding the nomenclatural level, recent research has shown that the bibliographic data, in reference to some taxa are often not very precise in origin and therefore many entities of uncertain taxonomic status have been commonly listed in Floras, Monographs, and in specific papers (Petagna 1787, Terracciano N. 1890, 1899, Terracciano A. 1894, Beguinot 1897, Ciferri & Giacomini 1950, Ricci 1958, Werckmeister 1967, Colasante 1976-77, Colasante 1989, Colasante & al. 1989, Bianco 1991, etc.). Moreover, owing to erroneous transcriptions and/or insufficient information, some arbitrary synonymies have been created and sometimes doubts have arisen on proper valid taxa so that they have been omitted from the current bibliography or they have been erroneously synonymized. To all this, we must add some cases, fortunately only few, in which the interpretation of the data may be doubtful in accordance with the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature. Therefore, the relative names of species, originating from different conclusions, are considered acceptable by some authors while doubtful or still quite invalid by others.

The above considerations, obviously, show that the systematics as well as nomenclature of the Italian Bearded Irises is still not at all definitive.

In this context here is a brief note in relation to *Iris relictata* nom. nov. (Monte delle Fate, Lazio. Figs. 1, 2, 5) and to *Iris bicapitata* sp. n. found in the Gargano Peninsula (Apulia. Figs. 3, 4, 6).

*I. relictata* Colas. nom. nov. — ≡ *I. suaveolens* (N. Terracc.) N. Terracc. ex A. Terracc. in Nuovo Giorn. Bot. Ital., ser. 2, 1(3): 182. 1894 [nom illeg.] (non Boiss. & Reuter in Boiss. Diagn. Pl. Or. Nov. 2(13): 15. 1853). ≡ *I. germanica* var. *suaveolens* N. Terracc. in Atti Accad. Sci. Fis., ser. 4 (App. 2): 7. 1890.

The nomen novum *Iris relictata* relative to the substituted *I. suaveolens* (N. Terracc.) A. Terracc. 1894 (not Boiss. & Reut.) and to its basionym *I. germanica* var. *suaveolens* N. Terracc. 1890 (Neotype designated here: Mt. delle Fate (Lazio), 9 May 1996, Colasante M. A. (RO) (Fig. 2)) and, only as a consequent information, in reference to the previous validation tried by Colasante in 1989, is hereby convalidated in as much as:

- a. *I. suaveolens* is a provisional name and therefore not valid in 1890, but later validated by A. Terracciano in 1894 as a new combination based on the previous varietal one in 1890
- b. the earlier homonym *I. suaveolens* Boiss. & Reuter already exists
- c. *I. suaveolens* (N. Terracc.) N. Terracc. ex A. Terracc. owing to priority must be substituted.

The chromosome number ascertained for *I. relictata* is  $2n = 40$  (Fig. 5).

*I. bicapitata* Colas. sp. nov. — Holotypus: Puglia: between Apricena and Sanniandro Garganico, 1 Apr 1992, Colasante M. A. (RO). (Fig. 4).

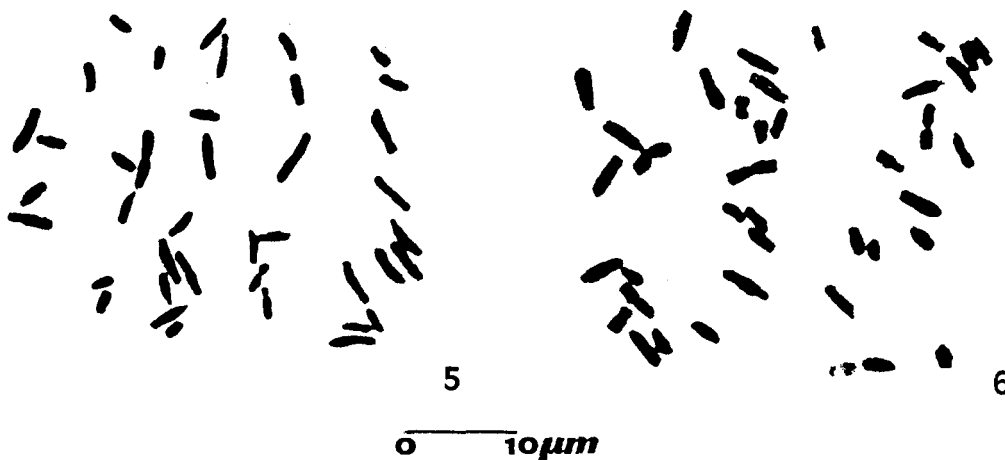
Perennis. Rhizoma crassum, horizontale. Folia linearia (usque ad 27.5 x 2.5 cm circa), ensiformia, subfalcata, acuta, striata, caule breviora. Caulis bicapitatus ad apicem, biflorus (rarissime triflorus), 30 cm usque ad 50 cm circa longus, foliis longior. Spatha (8-10 cm circa), plus vel minus herbacea, crenata. Bractee apicis scariosis, marginibus violaceis. Flores violacei (rare flavidi), fragrantis; tepala externa (6 x 2 cm circa, usque ad 8.5 x 3.5 cm) barbata, plus vel minus velutina et spatulata, margine crenato; tepala interna (5.5 x 2.5 cm usque ad 7.5 x 3.5 cm), subelliptica, crenata. Tubus perigonii longus 4 cm circa. Ovarium (1.5-1.8 cm) brevi pedicello praeditum. Stamina subcoerulea, filamentis longioribus anteris. Grana pollinica subsphaerica, intectata, sculpturata. Stigmata usque ad 4.5 x 1.5 cm circa. Capsula subovata, trigona (7.5 x 3.5 cm circa). Recedit ab *I. variegata* L. floribus violaceis (rare flavidis et venis subviolaceis paucioribus). Recedit ab *I. pseudopumila* Tineo et *I. revoluta* Colas. floribus amplioribus. Numerus chromosomatum:  $2n = 40$ .

*Habitat.* — In solo calcareo Gargani (Apulia), una cum *I. pseudopumila* Tineo, quae major videtur.

Floret Martio.



Figs. 1-4. **1**, *I. relicta*, a living individual in the field; **2**, the neotype; **3**, *I. bicapitata*, a living individual in the field; **4**, the holotype.



Figs. 5-6. 5, karyotype of *Iris relicta* ( $2n = 40$ ); 6, karyotype of *I. bicapitata* ( $2n = 40$ ).

**Description.** — Perennial plant with a more or less fleshy rhizome. Leaves linear (ca. 30 x 2.5 cm), ensiform, falcate-acuminate with evident ribs, rather shorter than the flowering stems. Stem bicapitate with two or very rarely three flowers, usually 30 cm long but at times reaching 53 cm. Spathe (ca. 8 to 10 cm) more or less herbaceous, carinated. Bracts with papery apices and violet margins. Flowers violet (rarely yellowish, shaded violet on the external tepals), fragrant. Falls (from ca. 6 x 2 cm to 8.5 x 3.5 cm), sub-ellipsoidal, bearded, more or less velvet and spatulate with very undulate margins; standards (from ca. 5.5 cm to 7.5 x 3.5 cm). Perigonial tube long ca. 4 cm. Ovary (ca. 1.5 x 1.8 cm) with a short pedicel. Stamens bluish with filaments longer than the anthers. Stigma (ca. 4.5 x 1.5 cm). Capsule obovate, triangular in section (ca. 7.5 x 3.5 cm).

Distinctive characters are: very rare pale yellow flowers with violet veins less than in *I. variegata* L.; flowers larger than in *I. pseudopumila* Tineo ( $2n = 16$ ) and in *I. revoluta* Colas. ( $2n = 40$ ).

Chromosome number:  $2n = 40$  (Fig. 6).

**Habitat.** — Growing in calcareous soil in the Gargano Peninsula (Apulia), sympatric with *Iris pseudopumila* Tineo, one of the probable ancestors.

**Flowering time.** — March.

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