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A new species of *Centaurea* sect. *Phalolepis* from Calabria (S. Italy)

Abstract

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Centaurea poeltiana, a new yellow-flowered species of *Centaurea* sect. *Phalolepis* from Aspromonte (S. Calabria) is described.

Introduction

The genus *Centaurea* is very rich in local endemic species, some recently described (Wagenitz 1971, Phitos & Costantinidis 1993, Phitos & Damboldt 1976). Yet, the discovery of a yellow-flowered species of *C.* sect. *Phalolepis* is remarkable. Within this section, only few whitish- or yellow-flowered species were known until now (*C. chrysocephala* Phitos & Georgiadis, *C. litochorea* Georgiadis & Phitos, *C. musarum* Boiss. & Orph. and *C. cithaeronea* Phitos & Costantinidis). Recently, a new white-flowered *Centaurea* (*C. corensis* Valsecchi & Filigheddu 1991), close to *C. deusta* Ten. and *C. alba* L., has been described from Sardinia. A plant recently discovered on Mt Aspromonte in S. Calabria turned out, not only to be the first Italian representative of the *Centaurea* (sect. *Phalolepis*) *deustiformis* group, a variable complex widespread in the Balkan peninsula, but also the first yellow-flowered representative of this otherwise pink- to purple-flowered aggregate. It is here described as a new species.

Centaurea poeltiana Puntillo, **sp. nov.** (Fig. 1). — Holotypus: “Italia, Calabria, Reggio Calabria, in loco Pietra Impiccata dicto prope Montaltum (Aspromonte) in fissuram lapidum schistosorum vel in terra lapidosa”, 1680 m, 26 Jun 1994, Puntillo (CLU; iso-PAL).

Planta perennis. Rhizoma lignosum, fusiforme, radicibus filiformibus elongatis. Caules plures, simplices vel ramosi, e basi prostrata-ascendentes, 20-30(-40) cm alti, striati, angulosi, superne tomentosi, scabridi, et glandulosi.



Fig. 1. *Centaurea poeltiana* Puntillo: habitus and organs of the inflorescence.

Folia alterna, pinnatifida aut pinnatisecta, segmentis apice mucronatis, basalia petiolata 3-5(-10) cm longa, oblonga; caulina sessilia. Capitula plurima, in paniculam laxam disposita; involucrium 10-12 mm longum, ad 5-6 mm diametro, obovatum. Squamae involucri virides, glandulosae, indistincte striatae, laeves vel in parte superna sparse pilosae, etiam glandulosae, appendice triangulari vel ovoidea in centro, atrobrunnea vel rarius luteo-brunnea, margine lato membranaceo hyalino minute denticulato. Flores citrini. Antherae citrinae vel rarius lilacinae. Staminum filamenta 10 mm longa, in parte superiore pilosula. Stylus 8(10) mm longus. Pappus 2-3 mm longus. Cypselae oblongae, 3-3.2 (3.5) mm, olivaceae, laeves, partim pilosae, lineatae.

Species Josepho Poelt, olim summo professori Universitatis Graecensis, qui inter primos eam vidit, dicata.

Centaurea poeltiana Puntillo

Perennial species, stems 20-30(-40) cm high, acutely-angled, striate, covered with sessile glands, usually procumbent at the base, ascending distally, simple or sparingly branched. Leaves green, greyish or white, hirsute, floccose-lanate or tomentose, pinnatifid to pinnatisect, with ovate, lanceolate, oblong to linear segments, mucronulate at apex. Basal leaves petiolate, the upper ones sessile, with long twined, inter and short curved hairs, and with sessile, hyaline and brilliant (when young) glands on both faces. Capitula in a loose panicle. Involucre 10-12 mm long and 5-6 mm wide, obovoid; appendages of involucrial bracts ovate to orbicular, covering bracts, with a large, triangular to orbicular, blackish rarely yellowish central spot, the margin white, hyaline, denticulate, lacerate to entire, the apex mucronate. Florets lemon-yellow, the outer erecto-patent; 25-28 mm with a long tube and lanceolate lacinias, two of them more short than others. The hermaphrodite flowers erect and 18-20 mm long, with corollines tube inflated in the middle. Anthers linear, lemon-coloured, extraordinary lilac with hairy filaments. Style with a tuft of hairs under the stigma. Achenes oblong 3-3.2 (3.5) mm, with loose hairs, olive-green, with thin but evident bright lines and a tuft of hairs, pappus shorter than achene.

Centaurea poeltianai is variable in several respects. The leaves are hirsute or floccose-lanate to tomentose, their segments may be ovate or lanceolate to linear. The anthers are often lemon-yellow, rarely lilac. The central spot on the the involucrial appendages is blackish or rarely yellowish.

Until now, the new species is known only from the Aspromonte, where it grows on siliceous soil or in fissures of schistose rocks, in open and sunny places, together with *Armeria nebrodensis* (Guss.) Boiss., *Minuartia recurva* subsp. *juressi* (Willd.) Mattf., *Asplenium septentrionale* L., and *Juniperus communis* L., among scattered trees of *Abies alba* L., *Sorbus aria* (L.) Crantz, *Quercus petraea* L., *Fagus sylvatica* L. and *Pinus laricio* Poir. It flowers in June and July.

The origin of this new species is probably the Balkan peninsula where this group is well represented. The presence in Calabria (S. Italy) of a large number of transadriatic elements as *Adenostyles orientalis* Boiss., *Carpinus orientalis* Miller, *Doronicum orientale* Hoffm., *Drypis spinosa* L., *Euphorbia apios* L., *Gentianella crispata* (Vis.) Holub., *Linaria dalmatica* (L.) Miller, *Pinguicula hirtiflora* Ten., *Pinus leucodermis* Antoine, *Quercus frainetto* Ten. etc. supports this idea.

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