



## *Edraianthus canescens* (Campanulaceae), a new species from the Central Balkan peninsula

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### Abstract

*Edraianthus canescens* is described as a new species from the central part of the Balkan Peninsula (eastern Dinaric Alps of western Serbia). It is a calcicolous stenoendemic of the Ovčarsko-Kablarska gorge of the river West Morava. Its population size is estimated to be less than 2000 mature individuals occupying less than 1 km<sup>2</sup>. The new species inhabits south-facing exposed rocky crevices, rarely screes, on calcareous bedrock, at elevations between 300 and 750 m. The closest relatives are taxa distributed in the central Balkans from the Balkan-Apennine *E. graminifolius* complex.

**Key words:** endemic species, capsule dehiscence, axicorn, indumentum

### Introduction

The genus *Edraianthus* A.DC. 1839: 448 (Campanulaceae) represents one of the taxonomically and biogeographically most interesting and polymorphic genera of the Balkan flora. There are already three monographs of the genus (Wettstein 1887, Janchen 1910, Lakušić 1974). Recently, *Edraianthus* was the subject of extensive studies in molecular phylogeny and phylogeography (Stefanović *et al.* 2008, Surina *et al.* 2011), cytogenetics (Međedović *et al.* 2007, Siljak-Yakovlev *et al.* 2010), taxonomy (Lakušić *et al.* 2009, Surina *et al.* 2009, Surina & Lakušić 2010), morphology and anatomy (Rakić 2010, Rakić *et al.* 2012).

Recent results of molecular (Stefanović *et al.* 2008) and multivariate statistical analysis of morphological parameters (Rakić 2010, Rakić *et al.* 2012) showed that in the central Balkans there are several distinct groups of populations within the *E. graminifolius* (L.) A. DC. 1839: 448 complex. Some of these groups partially correspond to the taxa described as *E. caricinus* Schott, Nyman & Kotschy 1854: 6, *E. montenegrinus* Horák 1900: 163, *E. jugoslavicus* Lakušić 1974: 49 and *E. vesovicii* Lakušić 1974: 79, as proposed by Lakušić (1974) in his monograph, whereas some of them appeared very distinct.

Plants that inhabit calcareous cliffs of the Ovčarsko-Kablarska gorge of the river West Morava in western Serbia (eastern Dinaric Alps) show clear morphological differences in comparison to other taxa from the *E. graminifolius* complex (Figs. 1 & 2). These plants are distinguished by exceptionally dense greyish-green indumentum of leaves, stems, bracts and calyx; raised trichomes directed toward the leaf apex, or orientated in all directions except towards the leaf base; involucre bracts with short apex, and in particular by capsule dehiscence by basal lateral pores. In addition, the results of recent molecular analysis of cpDNA sequences showed that populations from the Ovčarsko-Kablarska gorge are distinct from other investigated populations from the *E. graminifolius* complex of the central Balkans (Stefanović *et al.* 2008). Significant morphological differences and relatively distinct position based on molecular phylogenetic evidence from the *Edraianthus graminifolius* complex indicates that plants from the Ovčarsko-Kablarska gorge merit the rank of a new species.