



A new species of *Cerastium* (Caryophyllaceae) from the Kiamaki-Dagh Mountain, Iran

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Abstract

Cerastium azerbaijanicum is here described and illustrated as a new species for science. Morphological characteristics in comparison with the related *C. argenteum*, as well as a full description and distribution of the new taxon are provided.

Key words: Caryophyllales, Iran, new taxon, taxonomy

Introduction

Caryophyllaceae Juss. includes three subfamilies [Paronychioideae (Juss.) Meisn., Alsinoideae (DC.) Fenzl and Caryophylloideae] and about 86 genera (ca. 2200 species) mainly distributed in the temperate regions of the northern hemisphere with a center in the Mediterranean and Irano-Turanian regions, where 54 of 86 genera occur. A number of genera, especially of the subfamily Paronychioideae, occurs predominantly in arid areas, few in higher altitudes of tropical mountains and in southern temperate regions (Bittrich 1993).

The genus *Cerastium* Linnaeus (1753: 437) belongs to the subfamily Alsinoideae and it is represented of about 30 species [two subgenera, [subgenus *Dichodon* (Bartle 1841: 205) Fenzl (1842: 396) and subgenus *Cerastium*] and three sections [sect. *Strephodon* Seringe (1824: 414), sect. *Cerastium* and sect. *Schizodon* (Fenzl 1841: 970) Schischkin (1936: 447)] in the Iranian floristic area (Möschl 1988), of which 19 species were recorded in Iran.

As part of the revision of the genus *Cerastium* for the “Flora of Iran”, a *Cerastium* population was found in the Iranian plateau. It cannot be identify as none of the Iranian species and it is proposed as new for science and named *C. azerbaijanicum* Poursakhi, Assadi & F.Ghahrem. sp. nov.

Materials and Methods

Specimens preserved in TARI (acronym follows Thiers 2011) were examined using a Olympus SZH stereomicroscope. Local and neighboring Floras are also considered (Shishkin 1936, Jalas & Whitehead 1964, Cullen 1967, Möschl 1988).

TABLE 1. Morphological comparison of *Cerastium azerbaijanicum* and *C. argenteum*. Diagnostic characters are underlined.

Characters	<i>Cerastium azerbaijanicum</i>	<i>Cerastium argenteum</i>
<u>Plant height</u>	<u>5–9 cm</u>	<u>6–13 cm</u>
<u>Lower and middle internode</u>	<u>2–12 mm</u>	<u>5–27 mm</u>
<u>Upper internode</u>	<u>5–20 mm</u>	<u>40–45 mm</u>
Middle leaf length × width	6.0–18.5 mm × 1.2–2.2 mm	19–35 mm × 2.0–3.5 mm
Middle leaf shape	narrowly linear, nearly fascicled	linear or lanceolate–linear
<u>Upper leaf length × width</u>	<u>4–5(–9) mm × 0.5–1.0(–1.9) mm</u>	<u>17–30 mm × 3.0–4.5 mm</u>
Upper leaf shape	narrowly elliptic or lanceolate	linear
Lower bract length × width	4.5–5.0 mm × 1.0–1.5 mm	5.5–8.0 mm × 2–3 mm
Lower bract tip	widely scarious	scarious
Upper bract length × width	4–6 mm × 1.0–1.5 mm	6–7 mm × 1.5–2.0 mm
Pedicel length	6.5–16.0 mm	10–22 mm
<u>Sepal length × width</u>	<u>5.7–6.5 mm × 2.0–2.5 mm</u>	<u>6.5–10 mm × 2.5–3.0 mm</u>
<u>Petal length × width</u>	<u>7.5–10.0 mm × 3.5–5.0 mm</u>	<u>11.5–14.0 mm × 4.0–6.5 mm</u>
Petal tip	2–3 mm bilobed	3.0–3.5 mm bilobed
Petal indumentums	glabrous	with a few ciliate
<u>Filament length</u>	<u>4–5 mm</u>	<u>5–6 mm</u>
Filament indumentums	glabrous	with sparsely hairs
<u>Style length</u>	<u>2.5–2.8 mm</u>	<u>3.5–3.7 mm</u>

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