



Allium kyrenium (Amaryllidaceae), a new species from Northern Cyprus

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Abstract

Allium kyrenium, a new species of *Allium* sect. *Codonoprasum*, is described and illustrated from northern Cyprus. It is a very circumscribed geophyte growing on the calcareous cliffs of the Kyrenia range. This diploid species, with a somatic chromosome number $2n = 16$, shows close morphological relationships with *A. stamineum*, a species complex distributed in the eastern Mediterranean area. Its morphology, karyology, leaf anatomy, ecology, conservation status and taxonomical relationships with the allied species belonging to the *A. stamineum* group are examined.

Key words: *Allium* sect. *Codonoprasum*, eastern Mediterranean, karyology, leaf anatomy, taxonomy

Introduction

In the framework of cytotaxonomic investigations on the genus *Allium* Linnaeus (1753: 294) in the Mediterranean area (Salmeri 1998, Brullo *et al.* 2001a, 2001b, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2013, 2014; Bogdanović *et al.* 2009, 2011a, 2011b), a very peculiar population occurring in Cyprus is examined. It shows close relationships with the *Allium stamineum* Boissier (1859: 119) group, having a wide eastern Mediterranean distribution area (Brullo *et al.* 2007). All the taxa belonging to this group are characterized by spathe with two unequal valves, more or less divaricate, longer than the inflorescence, which is lax, spreading, with unequal pedicels, pendulous at anthesis and erect in fruit, perigone cup-shaped to campanulate, usually pruinose, stamens long exerted from the perigone, ovary with inconspicuous nectariferous pores. In particular, *A. stamineum*, which is a rather critical species complex, is included into the sect. *Codonoprasum* Rehb. in Mössler (1827: 538) currently represented by about 20 morphologically well differentiated species (Rechinger 1943, Wendelbo 1971, Kollmann & Shmida 1977, Shmida & Kollmann 1977, Kollmann 1985, 1986, Brullo *et al.* 1992, 1993, 1996, 2007, 2009, Karavokyrou & Tzanoudakis 1994, Bogdanović *et al.* 2008, 2011b). According to Meikle (1985), the populations of *A. stamineum* occurring in Cyprus are quite polymorphic and require more in-depth taxonomic researches. More recently, Brullo *et al.* (1993) described three new *Allium* species from Cyprus belonging to the *A. stamineum* group, i.e. *A. cypricum* Brullo *et al.* (1993: 280), *A. lefkarensis* Brullo *et al.* (1993: 280) and *A. marathasicum* Brullo *et al.* (1993: 283), all found in the southern part of the island. At that time, the authors did not have the opportunity to examine living material coming from northern Cyprus, particularly from the Kyrenia range, already recorded by Meikle (1985). During July of 2013, we had the opportunity to collect fruiting plants from Kyrenia range that have been cultivated in the Botanical Garden of Catania. Morphological and karyological investigations, as well as leaf anatomy, carried out on this material have emphasized that this plant is well distinct from the other species of this group previously described from Cyprus and also from the typical *A. stamineum* and allied taxa (Brullo *et al.* 2007). Therefore, it is described as a new species for science and named *Allium kyrenium*.