



Decalepidanthus (Boraginaceae) includes and antedates *Pseudomertensia*; a synopsis of the genus

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Abstract

The small West Himalayan genus *Decalepidanthus* (Boraginaceae) is reviewed. *Decalepidanthus* was erroneously transferred to *Pseudomertensia*, although the former name antedates the latter by four years. Seven species of *Decalepidanthus* are accepted in this paper, *D. echioides*, *D. elongatus*, *D. moltkioides*, *D. parviflorus*, *D. primuloides*, *D. racemosus* and *D. trollii*. Two additional entities, *D. flavescens* and *D. rosulatus* are considered unresolved. A synopsis of the genus is provided, the necessary new combinations are made, and a dichotomous key and distribution maps to the accepted species are given. Lectotypes are designated for *Lithospermum echioides*, *L. secundiflorum*, *Mertensia tibetica* and *M. nuristanica*, and a neotype for *Moltkia trollii*. *Mertensia lindelofoides* and *Pseudomertensia drummondii* are excluded from *Decalepidanthus* and referred to the genus *Lindelofia*.

Key words: Boraginales, endemic, Himalaya, India, Kashmir, Pakistan, synonymy, taxonomy

Introduction

Riedl (1963a: 608) published *Decalepidanthus* Riedl as a new genus of Boraginaceae from northern Pakistan, with *D. sericophyllus* Riedl (1963a: 608) as the only species. Almost simultaneously, the same author (Riedl 1963b) treated a small group of Boraginaceae from eastern Afghanistan under *Mertensia* Roth (1797: 34), employing the wide generic concept of that genus proposed by Johnston (1956). Subsequently, Riedl (1967: 58) coined the name *Pseudomertensia* Riedl as replacement (nomen novum) for *Oreocharis* Decne. in Jacquemont (1844: 122) Lindley (1846: 656), which is blocked by the conserved name *Oreocharis* Benth. in Bentham & Hooker (1876: 995, 1021; Gesneriaceae). Other generic names to accommodate the Afghan species as distinct from *Mertensia* did not seem available. However, while Riedl (1967) had also included some material from western Pakistan, he did not discuss a possible affinity to his own *Decalepidanthus*, probably for being then only known from somewhat outside of the ‘Flora Iranica’ area. Kazmi (1970) treated *Decalepidanthus* and *Pseudomertensia* as independent genera, and far distant from each other. Only Nasir (1989a, 1989b) noted their similarity and generic identity, but his (Nasir 1989b) combination of *D. sericophyllus* under the younger genus name *Pseudomertensia* is incorrect. On the basis of priority it is now necessary to transfer accepted *Pseudomertensia* names or their basionyms to *Decalepidanthus*.

As a matter of fact, the taxonomic history of the genus *Decalepidanthus* is a most perplexing one. The taxa currently attributed to *Pseudomertensia*, and here proposed to be transferred to *Decalepidanthus*, were originally described under a variety of genus names such as *Anchusa* Linnaeus (1753: 133), *Craniospermum* Lehmann (1818: 336), *Eritrichium* Schrad. ex Gaudin (1828: 4), *Lindelofia* Lehmann (1850: 351), *Lithospermum* Linnaeus (1753: 132), *Moltkia* Lehmann (1817: 3), and *Myosotis* Linnaeus (1753: 131). Apparently, Melchior (1940) was the first who discussed discrete generic rank for *Moltkia trollii* Melchior (1940: 115). An additional monospecific genus, *Scapicephalus* Ovczinnikov & Czukavina (1974: 64), described from Tajikistan, was subsequently transferred to *Pseudomertensia* (Ovczinnikov & Czukavina 1980: 104).

Phylogenetically, *Decalepidanthus* clusters together with *Myosotis* and *Trigonotis* Steven (1851: 603) (Weigend *et al.* 2013).

Etymologically, *Decalepidanthus* refers to the ten small appendages on the main veins and commissures near the