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NEW DATA ON RARE SPECIES *GROSSHEIMIA AHVERDOVII* (ASTERACEAE) IN ARMENIA

Two new populations of *Grossheimia ahverdovii* (Gabrielian) Gabrielian are found on one of the eastern spurs of northern extremity of Gegham Mountain Range (Armenia). In Armenia this rare species hasn't been found since 1968 and the herbarium material was represented only with two sheets of type specimens. *G. ahverdovii* is mentioned for the first time for Sevan floristic region.

Grossheimia ahverdovii, flora of subalpine belt of Armenia

Ասատրյան Ա.Թ. Նոր տվյալներ Հայաստանի ֆլորայի հազվագյուտ տեսակ *Grossheimia ahverdovii* (Gabrielian) Gabrielian վերաբերյալ: Հայտնաբերվել է *Grossheimia ahverdovii* հազվագյուտ տեսակի երկու նոր պոպուլյացիա Գեղամա լեռների հյուսիսային վերջամասի արևելյան լեռնաթևերից մեկի վրա: Տեսակը Հայաստանում 1968թ.-ից առ այսօր չէր հայտնաբերվել և ներկայացված էր տիպային նմուշների միայն երկու հերբարիումային թերթով: *G. ahverdovii*-ն Սևանի ֆլորիստիկ շրջանի համար բերվում է առաջին անգամ:

Grossheimia ahverdovii, Հայաստանի ենթալպյան գոտու ֆլորա

Асатрян А.Т. Новые данные по редкому виду флоры Армении *Grossheimia ahverdovii* (Gabrielian) Gabrielian (Asteraceae). Обнаружены две новые популяции редкого вида *Grossheimia ahverdovii* на одном из восточных отрогов северной оконечности Гегамского хребта. Вид в Армении не наблюдался с 1968 года и был представлен только двумя гербарными листами типовых образцов. *G. ahverdovii* приводится впервые для Севанского флористического района.

Grossheimia ahverdovii, флора субальпийского пояса Армении

Grossheimia ahverdovii (Gabrielian) Gabrielian. Perennial herb with woody oblique root and filamentous root collar. Stems 15-20 cm high, bent, ascending, more or less white woolly, a bit widened under capitule. Leaves lanceolate, all stalked, 16-24 cm long, 3-4 cm wide, longer than stem. Capitules terminal, solitary, almost globate, 4 cm long, 3,5 cm wide. Involucral bracts

ovate-triangular (outer), oblong-triangular (inner), with woolly edges covered with appendages on their 1/2 or 1/3. Appendages of outer and medial involucral bracts are rough membranous, ovate-triangular, the largest 10-12 mm wide, deeply palmate-fimbriate, dark brown; inner appendages small, 2-4 mm wide with toothed edges, light-brown. Flowers light-yellow, 27-32 mm long.

The species was described in 1991 by E. Gabrielian as *Centaurea ahverdovii* (Gabrielian, 1991) and renamed later to *Grossheimia ahverdovii* (Gabrielian, 1995). It was collected in Armenia twice: for the first time in 1946 by A. Ahverdov from the northern slope of Arailer Mountain (Aparan floristic region), on 2400 m above sea level (holotype: Aparan distr., m. Arailer, in clivo septentrionale, 7 km juxta pagum Erindzatap, in quircetis lucidis regionis subalpinis, circa 2400 m, 08.08.1946, A. Ahverdov", ERE 0000091 (ERE – arm 0142810)! and for the second time in 1968 again by A. Akhverdov together with N. Mirzoeva and Japaridze from north-eastern slope of Mountain Ukhtupar, Geghama Mountain Range (Gegham floristic region), on 2800m above sea level (isoparatypus: "Армения, Гегамский хребет, горный отрог Ухтупар, сев.-восточный склон, выс. 2800 м н. у. м., август, 1968, Ахвердов, Мирзоева, Джапаридзе [Armenia, Gegham ridge, mountain spur Ukhtupar; NE slope, 2800 m a. s. l., August, 1968, Ahverdov, Mirzoeva, Japaridze]", ERE 0001422 (ERE – arm 0148541)!). There is a reference to the third location of *G. ahverdovii* near Village Gorelovka in Akhalkalaki region of Georgia (Gabrielian, 1991, 1995); this specimen (paratype) was collected in 1930 by L. Kavrishvili (TBI).

All the attempts to find this species during my research on flora of Arailer Mountain in 1995-1998 (Asatryan, 1999) didn't bring to any results, but recently two small populations of *G. ahverdovii* were found on the trip towards Gegham Mountains of 18-20 of July, 2015. The habitat of the species was located on one of the eastern spurs of northern extremity of Gegham Mountain

Range on 2250 m above sea level, in a few km from Gavar town.

One of the populations was very small, represented with 15 specimens, the other – larger one was found on about 3 km distance to west from the first one. The habitat was a subalpine meadow with *Coronilla varia*, *Libanotis montana*, *Pimpinella rhodantha*, *Scabiosa caucasica*, *Rhynanthus pectinatus*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*, *Rhynchocorys orientalis*, *Echium russicum*, *Lotus caucasicus*, *Thalictrum minus*, *Phlomis tuberosa*, *Galium verum*, *Trifolium alpestre*, *T. ambiguum*, *T. canescens*, *T. trichocephalum*, *Betonica macrantha*, *B. orientalis*, *Nepeta betonicifolia*, *Geranium sanguineum*, *Stipa tirsia*, *Dianthus subulosus*, *D. cretaceus*, *Scabiosa caucasica*, *Cephalaria gigantea*, *C. kotschyi*, *Papaver paucifolium*, *Achillea millefolium*, *Ziziphora* sp., *Iris* sp., *Campanula glomerata*, *Asyneuma rigidum*, *Vicia cracca*, *Anthyllus vulneraria*, *Centaurea rhisantha*, *C. cheiranthifolia*.

G. ahverdovii plants were growing next to a population of widespread subalpine species *Grossheimia macrocephala*, but there was almost no overlap between the populations of these two species. The difference between them was evident, matching the descriptions given in the literature (Gabrielian, 1991, 1995): *G. ahverdovii* specimens were much shorter with large basal leaves, which were equal to stems or longer. The flower colour was light (lemon) yellow (not that bright as at *G. macrocephala*) and the morphology of involucral bracts was different (See the illustration pages). Some variability of the shape and position of involucral bracts towards scarious lanceolate fringed appendages, more or less concealing the basal parts (*G. macrocephala* type) has been observed among some *G. ahverdovii* specimens, located closer to *G. macrocephala* population. The *G. ahverdovii* plants were growing in groups of 3 to 15. The observations on the territory let to count about 130 specimens on the area of less than a hectare.

The condition of the populations may be measured as satisfactory. Limited grazing does not affect it negatively, but overgrazing can be considered as a potential threat to *G. ahverdovii* populations as there are shepherds summer settlements not far from the area.

The herbarium specimens from this population are processed and stored in the Herbarium of the Institute of Botany of NAS RA (“Севанский флористический район, Гегамский хребет, сев. склон в нескольких км от г. Гавар,

2250 м н. у. м., 19.07.2015, А. Т. Асатрян [Sevan floristic region, Gegham ridge, northern slope in a few km from Gavar town, 2250 m a. s. l., 19.07.2015]” ERE 189129, 189130).

G. ahverdovii is very rare, beautiful plant, endemic of Transcaucasia. The new found populations are represented with a very small number of plants, growing in the pastoral area. There is no any data from the two populations on Arailer and Ukhtupar Mountains since they were found accordingly 70 and 48 years ago. The species was not included in the Red Data Book of Armenia (The Red Book..., 2010) because of lack of an adequate data on its populations’ state. New data, given in this paper can be considered a sufficient base for assessment of *G. ahverdovii*’s conservation status in order to include it in the Red Data Book of Armenia.

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Photo: *Grossheimia ahverdovii* (left) and *G. macrocephala* specimens, collected by the border between their populations.

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