

ERITRICHUM SVENTENII, A NEW NAME FOR A PLANT FROM THE AFRICAN MAINLAND AND THE CANARY ISLANDS.

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RESUMEN

El género *Megastoma* (Boraginaceae) con su única especie *M. pusillum* es considerado congénérico con *Eritrichum*. Debido a la existencia de un homónimo más antiguo *E. pusillum*, Torr & Gray, un nuevo calificativo específico se requiere en *Eritrichum* y para ello se propone el nombre de *E. sventenii* Sunding.

In 1912, the same year as he described *Euphorbia handiensis* from Fuerteventura, Oscar Burchard collected the tiny annual *Megastoma pusillum* Coss. & Dur. (Boraginaceae) from the same island, near the small port of Tarajalejo. He did not record this interesting discovery in any of his written works, but a herbarium specimen is preserved at the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew (K,) (Johnson, 1957). *Megastoma pusillum* is rather rare and, as far as can be seen, has not since been collected in the Canary Islands. The species has, however, been repeatedly listed in the check-lists of the flora of the Archipelago (Lems 1960, Eriksson 1971, Eriksson et al. 1974, Kunkel 1974).

The taxonomic status of the genus *Megastoma* has been the subject of some difference of opinion between various authors. In their monographic treatments Brand (1931) and Johnson (1957) considered it to be a distinct mototypic genus, whereas Bentham & Hooker (1876) included it in *Eritrichum* ("Eritrichium"), a decision also followed in Index Kewensis by Jackson (1894) and Durand & Jackson (1906). *Megastoma* was recently once more placed in synonymy with *Eritrichum* by Airy-Shaw (1966, 1973). The generic differences given by Brand (1931) seem rather artificial and insufficient to justify the keeping *Megastoma* as an independent genus.

Megastoma should, thus, best be considered as congeneric with *Eritrichum* and *M. pusillum* transferred to this genus. The obvious name *Eritrichum pusillum* has, however, already been used

for a distinct American species. *E. pusillum* Torr. & Gray, so that a new name must be proposed for the North African-Canarian species:

Eritrichum sventenii nom. nov.

Syn. *Megastoma pusillum* Coss. & Dur. ex Bonnet & Barratte, III. Phanér. Tunisie t. II f. 4-11 (1895).

non *Eritrichum pusillum* Torr. & Gray, *Pacif. Railr. Rep.* 2: 171 (1855); *Krynitzkia pusilla* (Torr. & Gray) A. Gray (1885); *Cryptantha pusilla* (Torr. & Gray) Green (1925).

The new name is proposed in honour of the late Dr. E. R. Sventenius (1910-1973) an outstanding botanist who has in modern times, best known the Canary Islands Flora.

Other than on Fuerteventura in the Canary Islands *Eritrichum sventenii* is distributed on the African mainland from Western Mauritania and Southern Morocco eastwards, in Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and Eastern Arabia. Its ecological requirements on the mainland "usually in deserts and chiefly in sandy places" (Johnston, 1957) are apparently the same as in Fuerteventura where its single locality is situated in the arid coastal zone in the southern and driest part of the island. Phytogeographically the species constitutes one of the many connections with the Saharo-Sindian floristic element (Sunding, 1970) of which *Launaea arborescens*, *Neurada procumbens*, *Fagonia cretica* and *Pteranthus dichotomus* are other examples.

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