

(1983–1984) Proposals to reject the names *Viola montana* and *V. persicifolia* (*Violaceae*)

Kevin van den Hof,¹ Jiří Danihelka,^{2,3} Thomas Marcussen,⁴ Bengt Jonsell,⁵ Ronald G. van den Berg⁶
& Barbara Gravendeel¹

1 *Netherlands Centre for Biodiversity Naturalis – National Herbarium of The Netherlands – Leiden University branch, P.O. Box 9514, 2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands*

2 *Department of Botany & Zoology, Masaryk University, Kotlářská 2, 611 37 Brno, Czech Republic*

3 *Institute of Botany, Department of Vegetation Ecology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Lidická 25/27, 602 00 Brno, Czech Republic*

4 *Department of Plant and Environmental Sciences, University of Gothenburg, Box 461, 40530 Göteborg, Sweden*

5 *Konsumvägen 20B, 756 45 Uppsala, Sweden*

6 *Biosystematics Group – Wageningen University, Droevendaalsesteeg 1, 6708 PB, Wageningen, The Netherlands*

Author for correspondence: Jiří Danihelka, danihel@sci.muni.cz

(1983) *Viola montana* L., Sp. Pl. 2: 935. 1 Mai 1753 [*Dicot.*: *Violac.*],
nom. utique rej. prop.
Lectotypus (vide Nikitin in Bot. Zhurn. 73: 1541. 1988): “*Viola*
10 / *montana*” (Herb. Linnaeus No. 1052.13, LINN).

(1984) *Viola persicifolia* Schreb., Spic. Fl. Lips.: [163]. 1771 [*Dicot.*:
Violac.], nom. utique rej. prop.
Typus: non designatus.

The nomenclatural history of *Viola montana* L., a name referring to a violet species of *Viola* sect. *Viola* with a wide Euro-Siberian distribution range, was briefly reviewed by Danihelka & al. (in *Taxon* 59: 1869–1878. 2010 – this issue). As shown by Wilmott (in *J. Bot.* 54: 257–262. 1916) and Nikitin (l.c. 1988: 1536–1542), this name was misinterpreted soon after its publication, and since the 1820s, it was only exceptionally used in its original sense. After 1800, the name *V. persicifolia* Schreb. was often used for the species to which the type of *V. montana* belongs, while the name *V. montana* was applied for some morphotypes conspecific with *V. canina* L. However, starting from the 1830s, *V. persicifolia* was gradually replaced by *V. elatior* Fries (1828), i.e., by a name that has since been widely accepted over a large part of its distribution range.

There have been a few attempts to restore *V. montana* in its original sense, including Borbás (in *Koch, Syn. Deut. Schweiz. Fl.*, ed. 3, 1: 213. 1892) and Wilmott (l.c.), whereas Burnat & Briquet (in *Annuaire Conserv. Jard. Bot. Genève* 6: 143–153. 1902) and Hylander (in *Uppsala Univ. Årsskr.* 7: 242. 1945) argued that *V. montana* should be typified with a specimen representing plants related to *V. canina*. Despite the latter opinions, Nikitin (l.c. 1988: 1541) formally lectotypified *V. montana* with a specimen referable to the taxon currently known as *V. elatior* (see above and <http://www.linnean-online.org/11110/>), and we consider his lectotypification correct and in full accordance with the ICBN. Soon after this lectotypification, Kirschner & Skalický (in *Preslia* 61: 318. 1989) argued that the reintroduction of *V. montana* in its original sense would be counterproductive, and they announced a formal rejection proposal to be submitted. However, such a proposal was never written.

We have reviewed the more important floras and taxonomic papers published mainly in the last 20 years, since the lectotypification of *V. montana*, and covering the whole range of the species. Our survey shows that this name has been used instead of *V. elatior* only by a few authors, including Nikitin himself (in *Bot. Zhurn.* 83(3): 130. 1998; in *Tzvelev, Fl. Russia* 9: 291. 2006), Čerepanov (Sosud. Rast. Ross. Sopredel'nyh Gosudarstv.: 956. 1995), Mosyakin & Fedoronchuk (Vasc. Pl. Ukraine: 325. 1999), and Chen & al. (in *Wu & Raven, Fl. China* 13: 79. 2007; co-authored by V. V. Nikitin). In contrast, other floras, many of which published after 1988, accept *V. elatior* as the correct name, but sometimes with a note that *V. montana* should be proposed for rejection. These floras include Valentine & al. (in *Tutin & al., Fl. Eur.* 2: 275. 1968), Guinochet & Vilmorin (*Fl. France* 4: 1216. 1982), Lambinon & al. (*Nouv. Fl. Belg., Grand-Duché Luxemb., Nord France*, ed. 4: 207. 2004), Haeupler & Wisskirchen (*Standardliste Farn- und Blütenpfl. Deutschl.*: 545. 1998), Jäger & Werner (*Exkursionsfl. Deutschl.*, ed. 10, 4: 250. 2005), Heß & al. (*Fl. Schweiz* 2: 749. 1970), Pignatti (*Fl. d'Italia* 2: 117. 1982), Mossberg & Stenberg (*Den Nya Nordiska Floran*: 402. 2003), Marcussen & al. (in *Jonsell & Karlsson, Fl. Nordica* 6: 41. 2010), Fischer (*Exkursionsfl. Österreich, Liechtenstein Südtirol*, ed. 3: 433. 2008), Suda (in *Kubát & al., Klíč Květ. České Republ.*: 212. 2002), Mirek & al. (*Flow. Pl. Pterid. Poland*: 186. 2002), Martinčič (*Mala Fl. Slovenije*, ed. 3: 363. 1999), Domac (*Fl. Hrvatske*: 136. 1994), Mered'a & al. (in *Goliašová & Šipošová, Fl. Slov.* 6(1): 141. 2008), Király (*Új Magyar Fűvészkönyv*: 289. 2009), Diklić (in *Josifović, Fl. SR Srbije* 3: 150. 1972), Ciocârlan (*Fl. II. Român.*, ed. 3: 516. 2009), Kuusk & al. (*Fl. Balt. Resp.* 2: 194. 1996), Delipavlov & Češmedžiev (*Opred. Rast. Bălg.*, ed. 3: 110. 2003), and Zuev (in *Peškova, Fl. Sibiri* 10: 89. 1996).

At the same time, some of these authors use the names *V. montana* or *V. canina* subsp. *montana* (L.) C. Hartm. for plants of the *Viola canina* group; e.g., Valentine & al. (l.c.), Stace (*New Fl. Brit. Isles*,

ed. 2: 221. 2001), Guinochet & Vilmorin (l.c.), Haeupler & Wisskirchen (l.c.), Jäger & Werner (l.c.), Heß & al. (l.c.: 748), Pignatti (l.c.), Mossberg & Stenberg (l.c.: 401), Hämet-Ahti & al. (*Retkeilykasvio*: 129. 1984), Mirek & al. (l.c.), Domac (l.c.), Király (l.c.: 290), Diklić (in *Josifović*, l.c.: 149), Kuusk & al. (l.c.), and Delipavlov & Češmedžiev (l.c.: 109). Apart from Nikitin (in *Tzvelev*, l.c.: 293), among the floras checked only Muñoz Garmendia & al. (in *Castroviejo & al., Fl. Iber.* 3: 292. 1993), Marcussen & al. (in *Jonsell & Karlsson*, l.c.: 38), Suda (l.c.), Mered'a & al. (in *Goliašová & Šipošová*, l.c.: 132, 141), Ciocârlan (l.c.), and Čerepanov (l.c.: 955) indicate that the name *V. montana* was actually misapplied when used for plants of the *V. canina* group. Finally, only Elven (in *Lid & Lid, Norsk Fl.*: 549. 2005) took the consequence of this misapplication and proposed another name to replace it, *V. canina* subsp. *nemoralis* (Kütz.) ined.; however this combination has not been validly published.

Our review demonstrates that even twenty years after Nikitin's typification of *V. montana*, the nomenclatural consequences have been accepted only by a few authors, though in floras treating an important part of the range of the species. Authors of other floras, however, including those who paid considerable attention to nomenclatural issues and who were aware of the typification, deliberately continued using the name *V. elatior* instead of *V. montana*. They clearly preferred nomenclatural stability and clarity to correctness. Based on our analysis of the topic and related nomenclatural and taxonomic questions, we decided to follow these authors and propose the notoriously misapplied name *V. montana* for rejection. If this and the related conservation proposal are accepted, a clear and never misapplied name (*V. elatior*) will remain in use. Apart from a nomenclatural change in three countries (in fact restoration of the previous situation), we cannot see any disadvantage of this rejection. However, if this proposal is rejected, a name (*V. montana*) will necessarily come into general use that will have to be accompanied for decades with a note that it actually refers to a plant previously known as *V. elatior*, not to *V. canina* s.l. As *V. elatior* is red-listed and/or protected by law in most central European countries, the replacement of this name by *V. montana*, which is usually associated with a common species within the same region, would also have undesirable effects for nature conservation and legislation.

As shown in our analysis (Danihelka & al., l.c.), *Viola persicifolia* Schreb. represents most probably the second-earliest name for the plant recently known as *V. elatior*. This use prevailed in the first half of the 19th century. However, following the opinion of Fries (Fries, *Novit. Fl. Suec. Alt.*: 275–276. 1828), the name was reinterpreted as referring to a species in some other national floras still known under *V. stagnina* Kit. ex Schult. (1814). This interpretation was supported by the authority of W. Becker, who accepted *V. persicifolia* instead of *V. stagnina* in his last major monograph (Becker in *Beih. Bot. Centralbl.* 34, sect. 2: 393–395. 1917); unfortunately, his most important argument is erroneous (Gerstlauer in *Ber. Bayer. Bot. Ges.* 26: 45–46. 1943; Rauschert in *Feddes Repert.* 83: 647–648. 1973; Danihelka & al., l.c.), and the name most probably refers to *V. elatior*.

The name *V. persicifolia* has been accepted as correct (usually with *V. stagnina* as a synonym) by Valentine & al. (l.c.), Stace (l.c.), Guinochet & Vilmorin (l.c.: 1217), Lambinon & al. (l.c.), Van der Meijden (Heukels' *Fl. Nederland*: 342. 2005), Haeupler & Wisskirchen (l.c.: 546), Elven (in *Lid & Lid*, l.c.: 551), Mossberg & Stenberg (l.c.: 401), Hämet-Ahti & al. (l.c.), Diklić (in *Josifović*, l.c.: 149), Mosyakin & Fedoronchuk (l.c.), Nikitin (l.c. 1998; in *Tzvelev*, l.c.: 296), and Čerepanov (l.c.: 956).

In contrast, the same species is referred to as *V. stagnina* by Heß & al. (l.c.: 750), Jäger & Werner (l.c.: 251), Marcussen & al. (in

Jonsell & Karlsson, l.c.: 37), Fischer (l.c.), Suda (l.c.), Mirek & al. (l.c.), Meredá & al. (in Goliašová & Šípošová, l.c.: 133), Király (l.c.: 290), Ciocârlan (l.c.), Delipavlov & Češmedžiev (l.c.: 110. 2003), Kuusk & al. (l.c.: 193), and Zuev (in Peškova, l.c.).

This survey shows that the number of national floras using *V. persicifolia* and those using *V. stagnina* for the same species is approximately equal. However, there seems to be a certain trend in favour of the latter in recent floras of Germany, Austria and most recently in the Nordic countries. The options for a typification, necessary to fix the use of the name, are discussed in a simultaneously published article (Danihelka & al., l.c.). However, we think that neotypification or even conservation with a conserved type referable to *V. stagnina* is a worse solution than the rejection proposed here. In the first case, a notoriously confused name (*V. persicifolia*) would replace another name that has never been misinterpreted (*V. stagnina*), and the extent of the accompanying nomenclatural change will be similar to

that caused by the rejection. In contrast, the rejection of *V. persicifolia*, informally proposed already by Koch (Syn. Fl. Germ. Helv.: 85. 1836), will bring to an end a long-lasting and rather unproductive nomenclatural dispute. It will also stabilise nomenclature, and attention will be paid to taxonomy and conservation. We also believe that if the names *V. montana* and *V. persicifolia* are rejected, floristic records under these names would be interpreted with more care.

Acknowledgements

The research by JD was supported by the Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic (grants MSM0021622416 and LC06073) and by the long-term research plan AV0Z60050516 of the Institute of Botany, Czech Academy of Sciences. The work done by TM was supported by the Norwegian Research Council (grant 170832: “Allopolyploid evolution in plants: patterns and processes within the genus *Viola*”). Walter Gutermann encouraged us in a discussion to write these proposals.