



## Article

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**The correct name for *Asperula saxicola* Grubov (Rubiaceae)**

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**Abstract**

Following the revision of names for type specimens of Central Asian plants deposited at LE, the nomenclature of *Asperula saxicola* Grubov and replacement names, *A. gobica* and *A. gobicola*, is discussed and clarified.

**Keywords:** *Asperula gobica*, *Asperula gobicola*, *Asperula saxicola*, Central Asia, correct name, nomenclature, replacement name, Rubiaceae, taxonomy

During the revision of names for type specimens of plants deposited at LE (Herbarium Codes follow Thiers, 2021) and distributed in Central Asia (Grubov, 2000) the author of the current publication came across the name *Asperula gobica* Govaerts (2018: 79) which was published as a replacement name for *A. saxicola* Grubov. Recalling that Grubov himself was replacing the name *A. saxicola* with a new one and checking the names published in the *Katalog tipovykh obraztsov sosudistykh rastenii Tsentral'noi Azii, khranyashchikhsya v Gerbarii Botanicheskogo instituta imeni V.L. Komarova* (LE) (Grubov, 2000) an earlier, validly published name, *Asperula gobicola* Grubov, was found with a different spelling (Grubov, 2000: 210) which was published in accordance with Articles 6.11, 41.1 and 41.5 of the *International Code of Nomenclature for Algae, Fungi and Plants* (ICN, Turland *et al.*, 2018). However, the latter is not recorded in *International Plant Name Index* (IPNI, 2021) although the publication by Grubov (2000) is kept in the library of the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew (pers. comm. with Irina Belyaeva, May 2021). Even though the replacement name, *Asperula gobicola* was marked as nom. nov. (*nomen novum*), it was somehow overlooked by IPNI editors and was not included in IPNI. Govaerts (2018) also did not mention either the name *A. gobicola* in his publication or the publication by Grubov (2000), which suggests that he had not seen this publication and, thus, has published a replacement name, *A. gobica*, that is superfluous according to Art. 52.1 of the ICN (Turland *et al.*, 2018) and illegitimate. This name is shown as an accepted name



Figure 1. Holotype of *Asperula gobicola* Grubov (LE 01016156)

in the Kew taxonomic databases, *World Checklist of Vascular Plants* (WCVP, 2021) and *Plants of the World Online* (POWO, 2021). Many botanists and other scientists follow these global databases and could be misled.

The publication by Grubov (2008) mentioned in the paper by Govaerts (2018: 79) is actually a translation of Grubov's earlier publication (1982) from Russian into Mongolian. This translation was edited by Mongolian scientist, Tsendengiin Zhamtsran, who also was not aware of the publication by Grubov (2000) and accepted *A. saxicola* as it was published by Grubov (1982). Unfortunately, Grubov himself hardly participated in this updated translation of his 1982 publication (2nd edition) because of health problems, which caused his death in 2009, and all the work was done without his final editing. The correct name for *A. saxicola* and a nomenclatural citation should be as follows.

*Asperula gobicola* Grubov, Kat. Tip. Obr. Sosud. Rast. Tsentral Azii Gerb. Bot. Inst. V.L.Komarova: 210. 2000 ≡ *A. saxicola* Grubov, Opred. Sosud. Rast. Mongolii: 230. 1982, nom. illeg., non Ehrend., 1974 ≡ *A. gobica* Govaerts, Skvortsovia 4(3): 79. 2018, nom. illeg. superfl.

**Type:** Mongolia, Gobi-Altay, Khurkhu-Ula Range, Altyn-ama by the second spring in lower part of the gorge. On the right side of the fall. Dry gravelly and rocky slopes. 27.VII.1970, V.I. Grubov, N. Ulziikhutag, G. Tserenbalzhid 331, fr. (LE 01016156! – holotype, Fig. 1).

**Etymology:** The specific epithet derives from the place of origin, the Gobi-Altay mountains.

**Distribution:** Endemic of Mongolia.

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