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NEW SPECIES OF THE GENUS *NEPETA* (LABIATAE) FROM PAKISTAN

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A new species of *Nepeta,* viz., *N. gilgitica* Shinwari and Chaudhri is described. This species belongs to section *Spicatae. Nepeta gilgitica* is closley related to *N. kokanica* Regel.

Key words: New species, *Nepeta,* Description.

Introduction

The first taxonomic account of the family Labiatae of this region was written by J.D. Hooker [1]. Subsequently, this account was revised by Mukerjee [2], Shishkin and Yuzepchuk [3,4] and more recently by Rechinger [5,6]. But all these accounts comprises only a part of the region.

The absence of a complete taxonomic treatment of this family for our area makes it necessary to revise the family. Therefore, in first attempt the family from northern areas of Pakistan was revised to clear up the taxonomic position of a number of taxa. The study was part of M.Phil course [7] and was greatly facilitated by extensive collections by various workers of the Herbaria of Quaid-i-Azam University and Pakistan Museum of Natural History, Islamabad. Recently a number of new taxa have been described. For example, Al-Musawi [8] described 5 new species of the family from Iraq. Shinwari and Chaudhri [9,10] also described a number of new taxa of genus *Nepeta* and *Mentha.* To confirm the status of the taxa, molecular studies [11,12] and/or numerical taxonomy [13] may be used.

Results and Discussion

Nepeta Linn., Gen.Pl. ed. 5: 710 (1754). The genus *Nepeta* contains about 250 species that are distributed in the Northern Hemisphere, from Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean. The highest variation and greatest abundance of the species in *Nepeta* is found in S.W. Asia and Western Himalayas, including the adjacent Hindukush range. There are about 59 species of *Nepeta* in Pakistan.

Nepeta gilgitica Z.K., Shinwari and M.N. Chaudhri sp. nova. Annua, pluricaulis; caulis ca. 17 cm longi; prostrati vel suberecti; tota planta canescti-pubescens; folia sessilia, 0.5-1 x 0.2-0.5 cm, ovata-lanceolata, basi cuneata, margine crenata, apice acuta; inflorescentiae verticillasteris in spicastrum, 2-9 x 0.5-1.5cm, breve congestis, infirmi 1-2 interdum subremoti; bracteae 5-6mm, longae, oblongi-lanceolatae, ciliatae, margine integro vel pectinato-serrata, apice acuminata; pedicelae 1.5mm longae; calyx 7 mm longus, ciliatae, dentes subaequales, linearus, corolla albide, 8mm longa, tubus e calyce paulo vel vix exsertus; stamina 4, parallela, sub labium superius corollae ascendentia, superiora corollam + aequantia; stylus inaequaliter bilobus.

Type: Northern Areas: Gilgit district: Nomal to Naltar, ca. 2000m, 5.vii. 1976, Shahzad, Ashraf and Maqsood, 307 (ISL). Annual, prostrate or suberect herbs; hairy, upto 17 cm long; stem much branched from the base; leaves + sessile, lamina 0.5-1 x 0.2-0.5cm, ovatelanceolate, crenate, acute, cuneate; inflorescence contiguous, 2-9 x 0.5-1.5 cm, with one or two distinct whorls below the main spike, bracts of the lower whorls 6 mm long, oblong-lanceolate, margins pectinate acuminate; bracts of the main spike 5-6mm long, oblong-lanceolate, margin entire and ciliate, apex acuminate; pedicel 1.5mm long; calyx 7mm long, tube + equalling the teeth, teeth linear, ciliate; corolla 8 mm long, white, tube narrow, exserted

Fig.1. *Nepeta gilgitica:* Flowering and fruiting plant.

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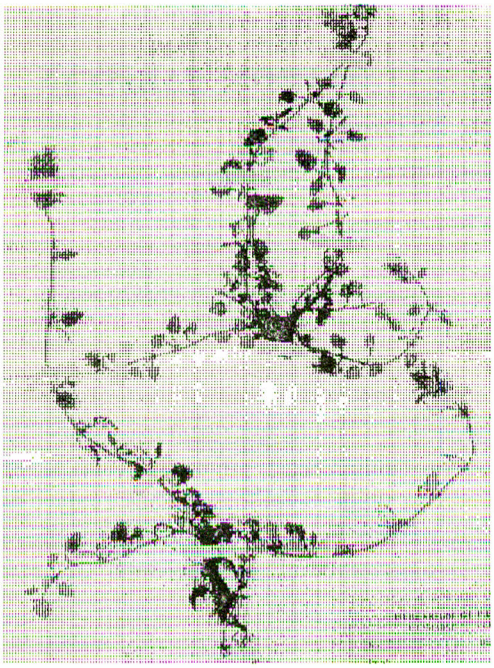

Fig 2. *Nepeta kokanica:* Flowering plants.

from the calyx; upper stamens as long as upper lip or barely exserted.

SPECIMENS EXAMINED

Northern areas. Gilgit district: Nomal to Naltar, ca. 2000m, 5.vii.1976, *Shahzad, Ashraf and Maqsood,* 3087 (ISL).

Distribution: Endemic to the northern areas of Pakistan.

This species belongs to section Spicatae and is closely related to *Nepeta kokanica* from which it differs in being annual and wholly prostrate and having bracts of the lower whorl pectinate, while in *N.kokanica* Regel the plant is perennial and erect and the bracts are entire.

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