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Asarina procumbens (Antirrhinaceae), locally naturalised in Austria

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Abstract

Asarina procumbens is reported as an addition to the alien flora of Austria. It is found locally naturalised in southern Styria.

Key Words: *Asarina procumbens*, Flora of Austria, first record for Austria.

Introduction

During a stay in Bad Gleichenberg a population of a white flowered plant was temporarily identified in the field as an *Antirrhinum*. It could not be determined with the Excursion Flora of Austria (FISCHER et al. 2008) and is obviously not listed in this Flora.

Material and Methods

Plant material was collected and the locality was documented. After determination with Flora Europaea (TUTIN et al. 1972) the material was compared with the illustration in Flora Iberica (GÜEMES 2009: Lám. 46) and the existing collections in the herbarium W. Abbreviations of herbaria follow THIERS (2019).

Specimen: *Asarina procumbens*, Österreich, Steiermark, Bad Gleichenberg, Weg auf den Gleichenberger Kogel, bei der Enzianhütte, beim Kreuz am oberen Rand des ehemaligen Mühlstein-Steinbruchs, 46°53'17"N 15°54'53"E, 495 m s.m.; auf Felsen; leg. 2019-05-05 E. Vitek 19-0008 [W, GJO, B, G] [Qu. 9161/1]. – Fig. 1.

Results and Discussion

The plant material collected belongs to *Asarina procumbens* MILL. The species was originally described by LINNÉ (1753) as *Antirrhinum asarina* L. MILLER (1768) put the species in the separated genus *Asarina*. Several authors included it in *Antirrhinum* (e. g. BOLÒS & VIGO 1995, COSTE 1906), from which it is distinguishable by the palmate venation of the leaves, the solitary, axillary flowers, and the growth form as creeping (respectively drooping from rocks) perennial with slightly woody axes at the base. ELISENS (1985) and VARGAS et al. (2004) confirmed the independence of *Asarina* from *Antirrhinum* and the South American taxa included into that genus by PENNELL (1947). The genus *Asarina* s. str. (i. e. exklusive *Maurandia*, *Lophospermum* and others) contains

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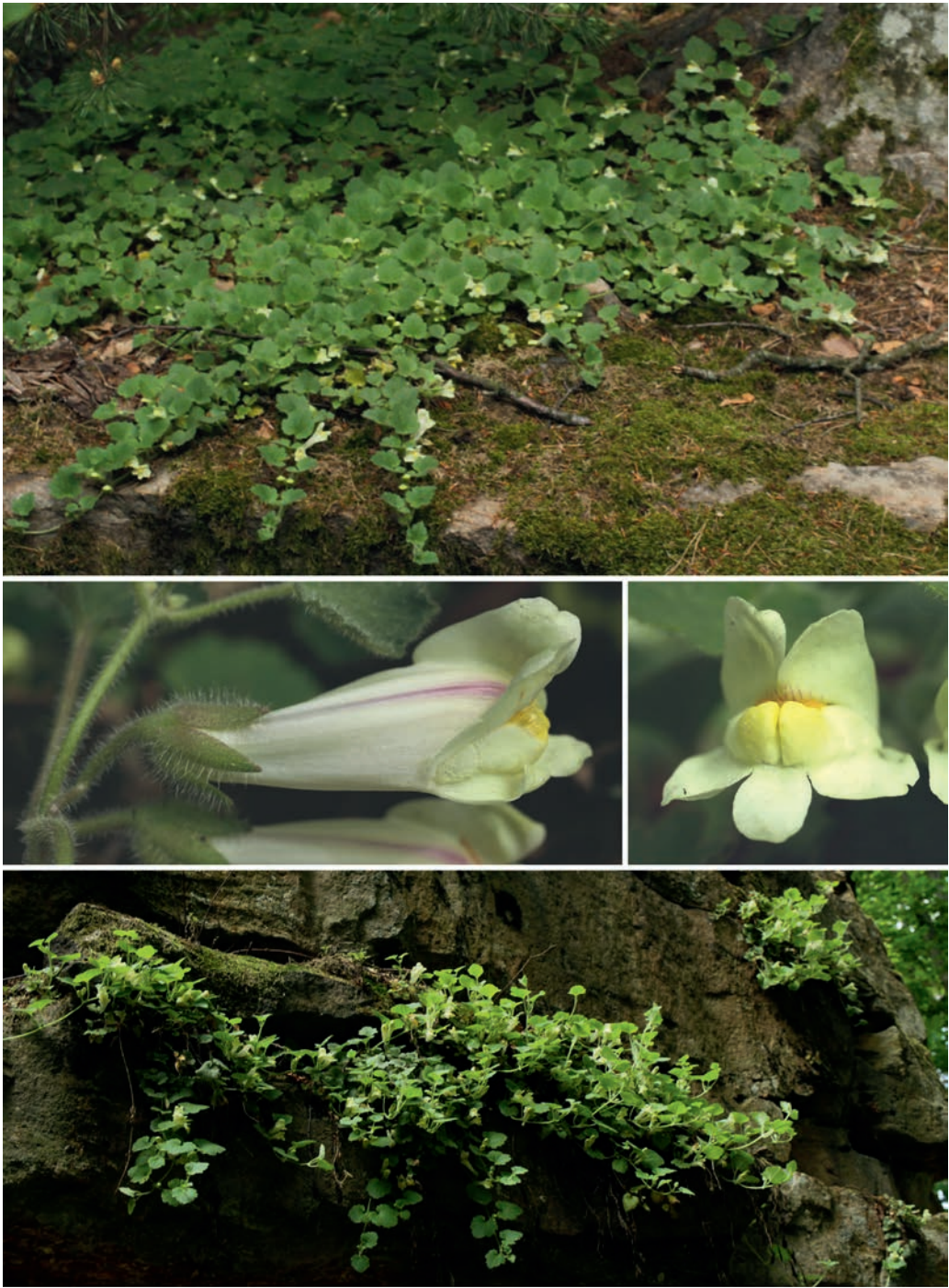


Fig. 1: *Asarina procumbens* at the Gleichenberger Kogel, Styria, Austria.

A. procumbens as the only species (SUTTON 1988) which is native to S. France (TISON & FOUCAULT 2014) and NE. Spain (WEBB 1972) and introduced / locally naturalised in Germany (JÄGER 2016) and in Switzerland (AESCHIMANN & BURDET 1994, EGGENBERG & al. 2018). The assignment to family depends on its circumscription: Scrophulariaceae [s. lat.] (WEBB 1972, BOLÒS & VIGO 1995, GÜEMES 2009); Antirrhinaceae (FISCHER et al. 2008); Plantaginaceae (JÄGER 2016).

The area of Gleichenberg is in the Styrian volcanic land, the mountain Gleichenberger Kogel is a shield volcano dated from the Miocene (GROSS et al. 2007). On a hump on the mountainside, the volcanic rocks reach the surface. This place was a quarry for millstones. Above the quarry is an outcrop formed of rocks originated of gravelly sandy sediments with a summit cross on top. *Asarina procumbens* is growing as chasmophyte on these sandstone rocks which are surrounded by dense mixed forest.

In the quarry is a small hut, a former repair station for the tools used in the quarry, today it has been restored and is used for festivities. Most probably, the population was introduced by an initial planting – a long distance transport of seeds seems not to be plausible. *Asarina procumbens* is rarely offered by specialised garden companies and may be cultivated in rock gardens. There is also a record of historical cultivation in Vienna. In herbarium W exists a specimen with two labels: "Antirrhinum asarina, [leg.?] Schkuhr" and "Antirrhinum asarina, H. V. [Hortus Vindobonensis]", s. dat. [specimen mounted on bluish mould-made paper, used before 1850] [W 0079347]. Maybe, material for cultivation was sent by Schkuhr to the botanical garden in Vienna, explaining the two labels on the sheet.

The population covers more than 100 m² which colonises the surface of the rocks but also fissures on the vertical sides (Fig. 1). The single plants form a carpet with their runners, but obviously also reproduction by seeds is successful. Based on the size some plants are more than 10 years old. Apparently, this species hitherto has never been recorded as an alien or even as a casual garden escapee for Austria, as it is missing in WALTER et al. (2002) as well as in GILLI & al. (2019). The population is viable and, therefore, *Asarina procumbens* is to be classified as locally naturalised new for Austria.

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