

A Notice about *Mentzelia laevicaulis* Torr. et Gray

by

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In August 1936 Mrs. Liselotte FRIDRIK collected a Loasacea near Mc. Gill, a little place near Ely in the Nevada desert; the plant was determined by SUESSENGUTH and HARRIES as *Mentzelia laevicaulis* Torr. et Gray (s. I. DARLINGTON, Monograph of *Mentzelia*, Annuals of Missouri Bot. Garden, Vol. 21, 1934, p. 103-226). GRAY says (in: Plant. Wright. I, 73) about this species that its flowers open at 4 or 5 o'clock p.m., while the sun is still shining brightly. Mrs. FRIDRIK found it flowering at night. This would not be so extraordinary, if Mrs. FRIDRIK and her mother as well as Mr. FRIDRIK had not stated with one accord that the opened flowers gleam in a dark room, while any delusion by reflexes of light accidentally falling in, is said to be impossible. There are, it is true, some earlier authors who mention plants the flowers of which are said to gleam in the darkness, such as *Lychnis chalcedonica*, *Papaver orientale*, *Tagetes patula*, *Lilium bulbiferum*, *Calendula officinalis*, *Helianthemum*, *Cenothera*; you may find further details about them in the well-known books of NEGER or MOLLSCH. However, I do not know of any such statement by a modern author, who has observed the phenomenon himself, and it is not known whether the problem has been experimentally examined before now. Perhaps American colleagues have a possibility to study that aforementioned "FRIDRIK-effect" at *MENTZELIA*-species more thoroughly. I do not consider it impossible that the numerous thin filaments of *Mentzelia* breathe intensively, and that the gleaming effect may be caused by an intensive process of oxydation. Besides we have to take into consideration that the Nevada desert has a very dry climate, and that electric tensions in the air are more in evidence there than anywhere else, as may be observed when cloths, furs etc. are rubbed together.

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