A NEW SPECIES OF THE GENUS SIBBALDIA (ROSACEAE) FROM SOUTH EAST ASIA

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Abstract

During a world wide taxonomic revision of the genus Sibbaldia of the family Rosaceae, a new species Sibbaldia unguiculata sp. nova was discovered from South East Asia. This species is characterized by its moss-like habit, ternate leaves, which are equally tomentose on each surface, Inflorescence a congested compound dichasia, two opposite bracts. Distinctly clawed petals, which are hairy at the margin.

A taxonomic key is provided to separate this species from the closely related species. Illustration of habit, with floral parts and a picture of holotypes is also given.

Introduction

The genus Sibbaldia was first described by Linnaeus (1753). It is placed in the Potentilleae by Hutchinson (1964) and is closely allied to Potentilla. Rajput et al., (1997) reviewed all the species. The main distribution of Sibbaldia is in S.E. Asia, only one species occurring in Europe and North America. The genus is of little economic importance, although according to McVean (1964) Sibbaldia is a reliable indicator of soil type, growing only in those which have a rather higher calcium status, than those formed from the poorest rocks. During a world wide taxonomic revision of this genus a new species was discovered which is described here.

Description of new species
Sibbaldia unguiculata M.T.M. Rajput & Syeda Saleha Tahir
(Figs. 1 & 2)


Holotype: Pakistan, Lahul District, Chenab Valley, 13000 ft. 2-viii- 1980. Erica Clark s.n. (BM 013168) Picture of holotype is given in Fig. 1.

Compact, moss-like tomentose perennial herb from a woody root stock. Stem basis covered with persistent leaf bases. Leaves trifoliolate. Petioles 4-5 mm long, sulcate, tomentose with spreading hairs, stipules membranaceous, 3-7 x 2.5-3 mm, with 3 parallel unbranched veins, mostly glabrous except for a few hairs at the margins; stipule auricles membranaceous, 23.5 x ca. 1.0 mm. sharply acute at the apices, with 1 distinct vein, glabrous. Leaflets 3, sessile or with petiolules to 3 mm. long, not articulated at the base, all of ± equal size 4-7.5 x 3-6 mm. obovate-elliptical, the apices with 2-5 glandular-tipped teeth, tomentose on both surfaces, with spreading glandular hairs; veins distinct.
Inflorescence a congested compound dichasiumas. Flowers 5-numerous, perfect, the pedicles 1.5-2.2 mm, tomentose; bracts 2, opposite and leaflike, with leafy stipules, lanceolate, 3-6.2 x 0.8 1.5 mm, tomentose on both surface. Epicalyx lobes 5, 1.5-2.2 x ca. 0.3 mm, tomentose abaxially, glabrous adaxially, greenish to purple, tips glandular. Sepal lobes 5, greenish purple 4-4.5 x 1- 1.5 mm., lanceolate, narrower at the base, distinctly veined, tomentose abaxially, sparsely tomentose adaxially. Petals 5, clawed, yellow or creamy-white, 3-4.5 x 1-1.5 mm, veined, slightly hairy at the margins. Stamens 5, antisepalous; filament ca. 0.5 mm, anthers ca. 0.5 x ca. 0.2 mm. oblong, narrower at the base; style subterminal, 1-1.8 mm. mostly purple, glabrous; stigma ca. 0.1 mm. across, capitate.

Altitude 3962 m; flowering period August. The specific epithet refers to the clawed petals found in this species. This species is known only from the type locality. Illustration depicting plant habit and floral parts in given in Fig. 2.

Taxonomic remarks

*Sibbaldia unguiculata* is characterized by its moss-like habit, temate leaves, which are equally tomentose on each surface; inflorescence a congested compound dichasia; two opposite bracts; sepal lobes tomentose on both surfaces; distinctly clawed petals which are hairy at the margins, and an invisible receptacle disc.

Having trifoliolate leaves, it shows some resemblance to *S. procumbens* L., *S. tenuis* Handel-Mazzetti, *S. tetrandra* Bunge, *S. sikkimensis* (Prain) Chatterjee and *S. perpusilloides* (Smith) Handle-Mazzetti. But this new species of *Sibbaldia* can be separated from these species by its inflorescence and petals. A key is provided here to help separate this species from the closely related species.

**Taxonomic Key to the related species of Sibbaldia Linn.**

1. Flowers 4-merous ................................................. *S. terandra* Bunge
   * I. Flowers 5-merous

2. Leaves lobed .......................................................... *S. perpusilloides* (W.W. Smith) Handel-Mazzetti
   *2. Leaves not lobed.

3. Petals purple; leaf-margin completely dentate.
   Leaf hairs yellowish ..................................... *S. sikkimensis* (Prain) Chatterjee
   *3 Petals yellow, creamy-white, or pinkish; leaf margin entire, only the apex dentate; leaf dentate; leaf hairs grey

4. Sepal lobes tomentose on both surface; Petals distinctly clawed ...................................................... *S. unguiculata* Rajput & Tahir sp. nova
   *5. Sepal lobes glabrous inside, tomentose outside, Petals not clawed

5. Petals yellow or creamy-white ovate-elliptical flowers 5-13 together; stipule auricles sharply acute .................................................. *S. procumbens* Linn.
   *5. Petals pink, linear or linear-oblong, flowers 1-2 together; stipule auricles acuminate .................................................. *S. tenuis* Hand-Mazzetti
SIBBALDIA UNGUICULATA SP. NOVA FROM SOUTH EAST ASIA

Fig. 1. Picture of the Holotype of *Sibbaldia unguiculata* sp.nov. (Pakistan, Lahul District, Chenab Valley) 13000 ft., 2-viii – 1980, Erica Clark sn. (BM 013168).

Fig. 2. Illustration of *Sibbaldia unguiculata* sp.nov., A, plant habit; B, leaf; C, flower (Ventral view); C₁ flower (dorsal view); C₂ flower (side view); D, petal; D₁ L.S of flower; E, Carpels and Stamens.
This species is quite distinct from *S. procumbens*, though *S. procumbens* and *S. unguiculata* are found growing together in the same area. Erica Clark collected *S. procumbens* and *S. unguiculata* in 1980 from Lahul, Chenab Valley, at the same time and this has helped in determining the novelty of the new species.

The data provided in the citation of the holotype are from the label, on the specimen (BM 013168) at the Natural History Museum, London. In attempting to pin point the locality on a map, it became apparent that an error had been made. Lahul or Lahaul District and the Chenab Valley are both in northern India, not in Pakistan, Lahul in some literature is spelt as Lahaul and is a town of Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh State, India, bordered by the Chamba (upper Chenab) on the west, Kashmir on the north, Spilt valley in the east, and Kulu in the South. Moreover, Lahul comes under the Himalayan Valley drained by the Chandra (upper Chenab) River.

**Acknowledgements**

We are grateful to the Directors and Curators of the following herbaria, from which the specimen were borrowed, and those who provided us with facilities when we visited then A, B, BM, GH, K, KYO, KUH, LE, RAW and US.

We are grateful to Professor R.C. Carolin of the University of Sydney, for checking the Latin description Dr. S.I. Ali of Karachi University for providing information on the type of locality and Dr. Muhammad Qaiser of Karachi University for his help. Both authors are grateful to Dr. S. Jury and Dr. S.Z. Hussain for their critical comments on the manuscript. During the period of this work, the senior author was a recipient of a Fulbright and Commonwealth Academic Staff Fellowship awards.

Note: The manuscript of this paper was accepted for publication in June 1994, issue of Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society, London, but due to some error in the final process of publication it disappear in the June issue. That's why name was already in circulation in some Botanical Literature.

**References**


(Received for publication 5 May 2008)