

## A NEW SPECIES OF EROPHILA IN BRITAIN: *E. CONFERTA*

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***Erophila conferta*** mihi, sp. nov. Rosulae in plantis bene evolutis densae; foliis latis laete viridibus, externis anguste lineari- vel lanceolato-spathulatis, internis latioribus ellipticis vel oblanceolatis (c.  $12 \times 6$  mm.), subintegris, petiolis brevibus late alatis, laminarum marginibus conspicue ciliatis, superficiebus glabris vel interdum apicem versus pilis simplicibus paucis obtectis. Caules numerosi (5)6-9(11), glabri, subbreves, 3-4.5 cm. alti. Racemi initio densi, dein laxiusculi, 5-10-flori vel (bene evoluti) 9-12-flori. Flores magni conspicui; sepalis late ovatis obtusis; petalis sepalis tris excedentibus, 3 mm. longis, latis (basi late cuneatis), ad medium bifidis lobis latis subelliptico-oblongis. Siliculae in pedicellis 7-9 mm. longis, parvae,  $3\frac{1}{2}$ - $3\frac{3}{4}$   $\times$   $2$ - $2\frac{1}{4}$  mm., ellipticae, inflatae, apice subtruncatae, stylo brevissime apiculatae.

The description is taken from specimens (now in the British Museum, Natural History) collected on 27th February 1938 by Miss M. S. Campbell at Layer Marney in N. Essex (v.-c. 19), originating from seeds collected on 8th March 1934 in the Island of Rhodes, between the harbour and Phileremo, and sown in 1935 in a pot in a greenhouse. From there the plant escaped to a heap of earth just outside the greenhouse, and from this heap of earth the plant had in 1938 spread to neighbouring parts of the greenhouse area. In 1947 for the first time was seen by Miss Campbell outside the garden, and therefore needs to be recorded. In 1945 alpines from a sink in one of the greenhouses were sent to Miss Campbell's house—Easter Tegarmuchd—near Aberfeldy, Perthshire (v.-c. 88), and planted out in a garden bed, and in March 1946 *Erophila conferta* appeared in that bed, evidently grown from seed in the soil sent with the alpines. In 1947 more plants appeared.

In 1938 I had named it "cf. *E. inflata*" on account of its inflated elliptic pods, but since then I had become more familiar with the plant and had realised that in no other way did it resemble *E. inflata*, which was originally described from material collected on Ben Lawers, a few miles distant from the garden in which the new plant has established itself. Further examination showed that it is very different from *Erophila praecox* (Stev.) DC. (cf. O. E. Schulz, 1927, *Pflanzenreich* 4, (105), 365), although like that it is an early flowering plant. Although *E. praecox* is recorded from Rhodes by Dr K. H. Rechinger in his recent *Flora Aegaea* (1943, 231) I was forced to the conclusion that the plant now described was distinct from any form described by Schulz. By a lucky chance, Dr Rechinger visited the British Museum the day after I had come to that conclusion and I was able to ask him to which of the plants listed in his *Flora Aegaea* he would refer the

plant. His reply was that he had never seen an *Erophila* at all like it, and that it seemed so remarkable and so distinct that to him it would appear to be a really separate species. With this confirmation of my own opinion, I have therefore described it as such. It is easily recognisable by its coarse rosettes of broad nearly subglabrous but ciliate leaves, numerous dense stems with dense conspicuous flowers, and small inflated fruits.

Since the above was written, further living material from Perthshire has been available, from which the following notes were made:— Stems with numerous but scattered spreading or patent pili in the lower half, almost or quite glabrous in the upper half. Pedicels patent. Sepals  $1\frac{1}{4}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$  mm. long, green turning brown-red to purplish, ovate obtuse, strongly convex on the back, with narrow membranous margins and with spreading rather shorter pili mostly in the distal half when the sepals are full-grown. Petals about 3.2 mm. long and  $2-2\frac{1}{2}$  mm. broad, lobes slightly unequal, usually rather porrect (parallel) except when the flower is wide open. Fruit about 4 mm. long and  $2\frac{3}{4}$  mm. broad; style 0.3 mm. long, cylindrical. Seeds 16-18 in each loculus, about 0.5 mm. long, broadly elliptical, dark brown when ripe.

Seed from Layer Marney has been scattered in my garden at Merton Park, Surrey.