A new species of *Delphinium* L. (Ranunculaceae) from Dagestan (Eastern Caucasus)

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**Keywords:** Delphinium samurense, diagnostic features, distribution, ecological and cenotic characteristics.

**Summary.** The new species *Delphinium samurense* Murtazaliev et Luferov (sect. Diedropetala Huth) is described from the Eastern Caucasus. The novelty is endemic to southern Dagestan (Rutul district). Its morphological differences from the closely related species *D. macropogon* Prokh. are shown. Distribution and ecology of the new species are characterized.

Новый вид рода *Delphinium* L. (Ranunculaceae) из Дагестана (Восточный Кавказ)

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**Ключевые слова:** диагностические признаки, распространение, эколого-ценотическая характеристика, Delphinium samurense.

**Аннотация.** С территории Восточного Кавказа описан новый вид *Delphinium samurense* Murtazaliev et Luferov (sect. Diedropetala Huth) – эндемик южного Дагестана (Рутульский район). Показаны его морфологические отличия от близкого вида *D. macropogon* Prokh. Приведены сведения о распространении и эколого-ценотических особенностях нового вида.
Floristic studies of the southern part of the Republic of Dagestan resulted in finding the specimens of *Delphinium* L. (Ranunculaceae), which have not been previously recorded for the Caucasus. When studying them, attention was paid to the morphological features of the rhizome: the presence of a tuberous nodosity; structural features of the stems, leaves, pedicels, sepals, nectaries, staminodes, stamens and carpels, fruits, and other structural features that are traditional diagnostic characters for the species of the genus *Delphinium* (Huth, 1895; Nevsky, 1937; Grossheim, 1950; Pawłowski, 1963; Kemularia-Natadze, 1966; Munz, 1967; Dimitrova, 1969; Malyutin, 1973, 1987, 2001; Tzvelev, 1996, 2001; Wang, Warnock, 2001; Luferov, 2012, 2018).

The study of the collected plants showed that they belong to a new species, the description of which is given below.

**Delphinium samurense** Murtazaliev et Luferov, *sp. nov.* (sect. *Diedropetala* Huth).

Perennials, 70–120 cm high, with a tuberous nodose rhizome 2.5–4 × 1.5–2.5 cm and numerous branching thin adventitious roots (Fig. 1). Stems simple or slightly branched in the upper part, rounded and ribbed, with simple white very short (0.1–0.3 mm long) straight or arcuate, appressed or slightly deflected hairs; in the upper half of the shoot and especially in the inflorescence, with an admixture of yellowish (reddish) or white glandular trichomes 0.2–0.5 mm long, straight, protruding or subappressed, ovoid and broadened at the base and containing light yellow or colorless essential oil. Basal and lower stem leaves long-petiolate (petioles 10–22 cm long, 3–4 times exceeding leaf blade, flattened, grooved on the adaxial side, semiamplexicaul at the base, pubescent as stems). Blades of the basal leaves rounded-reniform or rounded-cordate, palmately dissected into 3–5(7) rhomboid segments on thin petiolules 3–8 mm long. Leaf segments of the first order dissected into up to 3–4 orders into numerous oblong-lanceolate or linear, entire or with single oblong-lanceolate teeth with acute or pointed tips, segments and lobes, glabrous above, with simple sparse scattered appressed hairs below, usually densely hairy at the margins; at the base of the leaf blades with a wide notch, stub or wedge-shaped. Upper leaves ovate-rhomboid, dissected into 3–5 segments, which, in turn, are dissected into narrow-lanceolate and linear lobes of 2–3 orders. All leaves with strongly protruding veins on the lower surface, and more or less revolute margins of blades. Apical raceme multi-flowered (20–55 flowers), narrow, compact (Fig. 2). Bracts entire, narrowly lanceolate, 8–15 × 0.8–3 mm, 1.5–2 times longer than the pedicels or equal to them. At the base of the inflorescence, the bracts twice or thrice trifid, 4–7 × 3–6 cm, 2–3 times longer than the pedicels. Two bracteoles attached close to each other, located 1–3 mm from the calyx, linear-subulate, entire, usually arcuate, 3–6 × 0.5–1.5(2) mm. Calyx white, often with yellowish and light green stripes on the bottom, after drying often (not always) turning blue, covered from the outside with simple, very short (0.2–0.4 mm long), appressed, arcuate and straight hairs. Spur straight or slightly arcuate, 14–17 mm long, 2–2.5(3) mm thick. (fig. 3a), 2–3 times longer than the pedicels. Lateral sepals 10–14 × 4–7 mm, broadly cuneate at the base, acute or rounded at the tip (fig. 3b). Lower sepals 10–14 × 2–4 mm, narrowly cuneate at the base, pointed at the top (fig. 3c). Corolla blue, with blue, less often purple, longitudinally arranged veins. Petal nectaries 10–13 × 1.5–2 mm, narrow, pointed at the base and broadened to the bifid top with narrow acute lobes.
The lower petals (staminodia) 4–8 mm long, with blades bifid for 25–40 % of their length, on the inner (upper) side with a thick yellow or yellow-orange pubescence of simple, 1–2 mm long, hairs (fig. 3d). Filaments thin, glabrous. Anthers broadly elliptic (fig. 3f). Three carpels (fig. 4) and follicles 15–19 × 2.5–3 mm, with a slightly protruding dorsal vein, smooth on the sides, with appressed or subappressed short, 0.3–1 mm long, thin white hairs. Stylodia slightly arched, 4–6 × 0.3–0.6 mm. Seeds obovate or ellipsoidal, 0.7–1 × 0.6–0.8 mm, black; their surface is covered with small pressed scales.

Holotype: “Dagestan, Rutulsky district, above the village of Djinykh, 1790 m. 41°67’49.1″N, 47°04’02.2″E. 26 VII 2016. R. Murtazaliev” (LE, fig. 5; iso – LE, DAG, MHA). Паратипы: «Дагестан, Рутульский р-н, выше с.[ела] Джиных, 1790 м. 41°67’49.1″ с. ш. 47°04’02.2″ в. д. 26 VII 2016. Р . Муртазалиев» (LE, рис. 5; изо – LE, DAG, MHA).
Affinities. The species is closest to *D. macro-pogon* Prokh. (fig. 6), from which it differs well by a longer inflorescence, the colour and length of sepals, the length of the spur, the colour of nectar-ies and staminodes, the colour and length of hairs on staminodes, the length of follicles and stylodia (Table).

**Table**

| Features                  | *D. samurense*                      | *D. macropogon*                      |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Inflorescence             | 30–50 cm long                      | 9–12 cm long                        |
| Sepals                    | white, after drying – blue or light yellow, 10–14 mm long | light yellow, 7–8 mm long            |
| Spur                      | 14–17 mm long                      | 9–14 mm long                        |
| Nectaries and staminodia  | blue with blue, rarely purple longitudinal veins | light yellow                      |
| Hairs on the staminodia   | yellow or yellow-orange, 1–2 mm long | white, long: 1.5–2.5 mm long        |
| Follicles                 | 15–19 mm long, including stylodia 4–6 mm long | 8–10 mm long, including stylodia 2–3 mm long |

Distribution. *D. samurense* is an endemic known only from southern Dagestan: Rutul district, the upper part of Samur River valley; the type of species range is South Dagestan. According to the botanical and geographical zoning of the Caucasus proposed by A. L. Takhtajan and Yu. L. Menitsky (Menitsky, 1991), this territory belongs to the Manas-Samur floral region situated in the southern part of Dages-tan. It includes river basins of the Caspian Dagestan from Shura-Ozen River to Samur River. All locations of the species are situated in the upper part of the Samur River basin (fig. 7). The climate in the species habitat is continental with mild winters and summers. There are no accurate climatic data available for the habitat of the new species, but the average annual temperature in the nearby village of Luchek is known to be +8 °C, and the average annual rainfall in the nearby village of Mishlesh is 749 mm (Gadzhieva, Solovyev, 1996). Here steppe-meadows on low-density gristly soils on the southern slopes and mixed small-leaved forests and subalpine meadows on brown soils on the northern slopes are commonly found (Chilikina, Schiffers, 1962).

*Delphinium samurense* grows in sparse shrub communities on a rocky-gravelly slope with a well-developed grass cover. Plant communities, where this species occurs, include such herbs as *Phleum pratense* L., *Bromopsis variegata* (M. Bieb.) Holub, *Salvia verticillata* L., *Galium album* Mill., *Polygonum alpinum* All., *Campanula rapunculoides* L., *Anthriscus nemorosa* (M. Bieb.) Spreng., etc.; shrubs such as *Rosa pimpinellifolia* L., *Berberis vulgaris* L., *Spiraea hypericifolia* L., *Cotoneaster* sp.
Fig. 5. The holotype of *Delphinium samurense* Murtazaliev et Luferov (LE).
Fig. 6. The holotype of *Delphinium macropogon* Prokh. (LE).
A closely related species *D. macropogon* occurs in vicinities of Makhachkala: Talgi gorge, Tarki-Tau (Prokhanov, 1961; Murtazaliev, 2009, 2016; Anatov, 2020). The type of the species range is northern Dagestan.

The origin of *D. samurense*, in our opinion, is autochthonous, which was previously noted for the majority of other species of this genus in the flora of the Caucasus (Kemularia-Natadze, 1966; Kemularia-Natadze, Gagnidze, 1969; Gagnidze, 1974). For this territory, 40 species of *Delphinium* were listed (Luferov, 2012), of which 24 are endemic, that also indicates their indigenous origin.

Attention must be paid to conservation of *D. samurense* populations. They consist of 5–10 to 50 individuals, of which generative individuals predominate. Plants are scattered: dense thickets are not formed. Seed propagation is noticed, but during dry years the germination rate is low (up to 10 %), as well as plant survival, especially in the first 3 years of ontogenesis. The population range is small (not more than 20–70 m²).

The limiting factors are livestock grazing, hay-making, grass burning; potentially – collecting flowering plants for bouquets due to their high ornamental value. In addition, the safety of populations is of concern, given its proximity to the highway and settlements.

The narrowly endemic nature of *D. samurense*, the peculiarities of the population structure of natural communities (predominance of generative individuals and a very small number of plants in the virginal period of ontogenesis), low seed productivity and exposure to limiting environmental factors call for the need of making efforts to protect natural populations of the new species and include it in the new edition of the Red Data Book of the Republic of Dagestan. Possibility of introducing *D. samurense* into cultivation should also be estimated.

**Acknowledgements**

The authors are grateful to the V. V. Shvanova, junior researcher at the Komarov Botanical Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences (BIN RAS), for help in the design of photographs of herbarium specimens. Supported by the Russian Academic Excellence Project 5–100 (Sechenov University).
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