STUDIES IN THE GESNERIACEAE OF THE OLD WORLD

XIX: THE GENUS ISOMETRUM

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Isometrum is one of the genera separated by Craib from the *Didissandra* complex and it has contained till now only two species, *I. farreri* Craib and *I. glandulosum* (Batalin) Craib. Strangely enough Craib failed to associate with these *Didissandra primuliflora* Batalin or *D. giraldii* Diels, which are both very closely allied to *I. glandulosum*. However his suggestion that *Didissandra fargesii* Franchet might be congeneric has proved correct, and there is one other species that probably belongs here, *Didissandra leucantha* Diels.

Thus there are six names to be considered in the genus *Isometrum*. After a period of considerable doubt I have decided to allow each of these to retain its independence for the time being, and a key to them is supplied below. This key owes something to the original descriptions as well as to personal study of the materials and there are points about which I am far from being fully satisfied. There are some notes on these points in the enumeration which follows.

Had I been entirely reliant on dried material I should have been tempted to divide the genus rather sharply into two groups, *I. farreri* and *I. fargesii*, and perhaps *I. leucanthum*, standing apart from the other species. They have corollas with relatively short broad tubes and lobes which, from dried material, appear to be directed forward from the mouth of the tube at which there is no constriction. That this is an artefact due to pressing is clear from Miss Snelling's painting of *I. farreri* (Bot. Mag. t.8917), which was, of course, made from a living plant. However it is noteworthy that in the species other than *I. farreri* and *I. fargesii* the constriction of the throat and the spreading nature of the lobes are immediately discernible in dried material.

Isometrum is one of the more northerly genera of this group. Eastern Tibet, Kansu, Shensi and Szechuan comprise its relatively compact area of distribution and it has not yet been recorded as far south as Yunnan, a province otherwise much richer in members of the *Gesneriaceae*.

Key to the species of Isometrum

Corolla-lobes less than half as long as the tube, which appears campanulate in dried material.
- Leaves lobulate-dentate; corolla nearly 1·5 cm. long.
  - Flowers white; petiole 4–8 cm. long . . . 1. *leucanthum*
  - Flowers pink; petiole about 1 cm. long . . 2. *farreri*
- Leaves sub-entire, corolla less than 1 cm. long . 3. *fargesii*

Corolla-lobes more than half as long as the cylindric tube.
- Ovary glandular-pubescent . . . . . 4. *giraldii*
- Ovary glabrous.

Stamens reaching to throat of corolla-tube . 5. *glandulosum*
Stamens only reaching to middle of corolla-tube 6. *primuliflorum*

1. **Isometrum leucanthum** (Diels) B. L. Burtt, **comb. nov.**

Syn.: *Didissandra leucantha* Diels in Fedde, Rep. Sp. Nov. Beih. xii, 487 (1922).

E. TIBET. Beju-Batang, unterhalb Rumtung am Passe Mäla [31°N, 99°E], Kalkfelsen, 3900 m., *Limpricht* 2201 (not seen).

Dr. S. Kulczynski has kindly searched in the herbarium of the university at Wroclaw for the type of this species, but reports that it is not to be found. Diels compared it with *Didissandra* (i.e. *Isometrum*) *glandulosa* and said that it differed in having longer petioles with denser indumentum, few-flowered inflorescences, larger white corolla and narrower ovary. Using the details given in the original description, it is seen to be closer to *I. farreri* than *I. glandulosum*, differing in its larger white flowers and longer petioles. The corolla-tube is described as 15 mm. long, 8 mm. wide at base, 6 mm. at throat, and the lobes 5–6 mm. long. Rather than risk the species being lost to sight I have made the necessary transfer to *Isometrum*.

2. **Isometrum farreri** Craib in Notes R.B.G. Edinb. xi, 250, 267 (1919); Anthony in Bot. Mag. t.8917 (1938).

CHINA. Prov. Kansu: very general at low elevations in southern Kansu, on rather cool rocks and very steep banks of cool clammy soil that grows a fine film of moss, fl. Aug. 28, seed Nov. 1, *Farrer & Purdom* 262 (holo. E).

When first introduced into cultivation this was recorded as *Oreocharis henryana* Oliv. (Farrer in Journ. Roy. Hort. Soc. London, xlii, 87: 1916), but that was a clear misidentification.

3. **Isometrum fargesii** (Franch.) B. L. Burtt, **comb. nov.**

Syn.: *Didissandra fargesii* Franch. in Bull. Soc. Linn. Paris, n.s. xv, 123 (1899).

CHINA. Prov. Su-tchuen: Mou Koua Kean, près de Tchen Keon Tin, 1000m., herbe croit sur les rochers un peu humides, fleurs d'un pourpre noir, 18 Aug. 1898, *P. Farges* 1455 (holo. P, iso. E).

It may be mentioned that despite the collector's note that the corolla is blackish-purple, the dried corollas are a similar dark pinkish-purple to those of *I. farreri*, whose living flowers are pink.

4. **Isometrum giraldii** (Diels) B. L. Burtt, **comb. nov.**

Syn.: *Didissandra giraldii* Diels in Engl. Bot. Jahrb. xxxvi, Beibl. No. 82, p. 98 (1905).

CHINA. N. Shensi, 1897, *Giraldi* (iso. K). Shensi, Tapeishan, 1910, *Purdom* (K). W. Szechuan, July 1908, *Wilson* 2255 (K).

5. **Isometrum glandulosum** (Batalin) Craib in Notes R.B.G. Edinb. xi, 267 (1919).

Syn.: *Didissandra glandulosa* Batalin in Act. Hort. Petrop. xii, 175 (1892).

CHINA. N. Szechuan: inter pagos Siao-pu et I-tang, 17 Aug. 1885, *Potanin* holo. LE).

6. **Isometrum primuliflorum** (Batalin) B. L. Burtt, **comb. nov.**

Syn.: *Didissandra primuliflora* Batalin in Acta Hort. Petrop. xiv, 176 (1895).

E. TIBET. Siao-kin-ho, 26 July 1893, *Potanin* (LE). Mao-niu-kon, 20 July 1893, *Potanin* (LE, K).

CHINA. Szechuan, Tatsien-lu, 2640 m., July 1903, *Wilson* 4280 (BM, K, P). Tatsien-lu, summit of a mountain, Sept. 1938, *McLaren's collector* AC200 (E).

I am not fully satisfied of the distinction between this species and *I. glandulosum*. The authentic material I have seen has not been very adequate and it is unfortunate that Batalin, though the original author of both species, made no direct comparison between them.