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THE RED DATA BOOK
OF RARE AND THREATENED PLANTS
OF GREECE

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D. PHITOS, A. STRID,
S. SNOGERUP and W. GREÜTER

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Jankaea heldreichii (Boiss.) Boiss.

GESNERIACEAE

Rare

Status

Rare. A singular local endemic of Mt. Olimbos. Fruiting material was collected by Heldreich in 1851, and flowering material a few years later by Orphanides. Although rare and local it is protected by the fact that it grows on often inaccessible rock faces in rarely visited parts of the mountain.

Description

Acaulescent perennial herb with flat leaf rosettes. Leaves 2-4.5 × 1-2.5 cm; petiole 0.4-1.2 cm, with a dense wool of long, soft, light brown hairs; blade obovate to broadly elliptic, entire, obtuse, white-villous to silvery-sericeous above (especially when young), light brown-villous beneath. Scapes 1-3 from each rosette, 3-10 cm long, slender, bearing 1-3 nodding flowers. Scape, pedicels and base of calyx glandular-pubescent. Bracts lacking. Calyx divided almost to the base into 5 oblong, obtuse, lobes c. 3 mm long. Corolla almost regular, broadly campanulate, 11-16 mm, bluish-lilac, divided to the middle into 4(-5) obovate lobes. Stamens 4, included in corolla tube; anthers free, ovoid, about as long as filaments (c. 2.5 mm), bluish-lilac. Style c. 7 mm, narrowly clavate. Capsule c. 7 mm, ovoid, acute, subglabrous. Seeds very small.

Distribution

Endemic. Restricted to the northern and eastern sides of Mt. Olimbos.

Habitat and ecology

It is found in shady crevices of limestone rocks, especially near streams, generally between 700 and 1400 m altitude, in ravines on the eastern and northern sides of the mountain. Flowering from mid-May to the end of July.

Conservation measures taken

Most of the populations occur within the Mt. Olimbos National Park.

Biology and potential value

The *Gesneriaceae* is a large, mainly tropical family with only five representatives in Europe: four in the Balkan Peninsula and one in the Pyrenees. The European species are presumably relicts from warmer periods in the Tertiary. *Jankaea* differs from the related genera *Ramonda* and *Haberlea* in the regular flowers with relatively long corolla tubes, and the entire silvery-sericeous leaves.

The species is sometimes cultivated in rock gardens and under glass in C and N Europe, but is more difficult to keep than *Ramonda* and *Haberlea*. The hybrid between *Jankaea heldreichii* and *Ramonda myconei* (from the Pyrenees) has been produced in cultivation and has been given the name *Jankemonda vandedemii*.

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ARNE STRID

