Agrostis griffithiana (Poaceae: Agrostidinae)—typification, a new synonym and an update of the distribution in India

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Abstract

Agrostis griffithiana (Poaceae: Agrostidinae) is typified, fully described and illustrated, and its distribution in northeast India is elucidated. A new synonym is identified, its circumscription and taxonomy is clarified and discussed, especially in relation to the similar species A. pilosula and A. munroana.

Key words: Agrostis munroana, A. pilosula, A. wardii, Calamagrostis, Deyeuxia griffithii, NE India, nomenclature, taxonomy

Introduction

Agrostis Linnaeus (1753: 61), Calamagrostis Adanson (1763: 31), Deyeuxia Clarion ex Beauvois (1812: 43) and Lachnagrostis Trinius (1820: 128) are members of the subtribe Agrostidineae in the tribe Poeae in the subfamily Pooidae (Soreng et al. 2007, Saarela et al. 2010) of the Poaceae. These genera are notoriously problematic because they include several difficult species complexes and numerous hybrids (Howard et al. 2009, Paszko & Nobis 2010, Paszko 2011, Paszko & Ma 2011), and the most recent studies of the group highlighted numerous taxonomic and nomenclatural inconsistencies. Many of these difficulties were resolved by Paszko (2012b), Paszko & Soreng (2013), Paszko (2013), and Paszko et al. (2013). During a detailed revision new species have been described (Paszko 2012a, Paszko & Pendry 2013, Paszko & Chen 2013) and the taxonomic problems addressed here came to light.

Agrostis griffithiana (Hooker 1896: 263) Bor (1960: 387) was published in the genus Calamagrostis by Hooker (1896) based on collections from northeastern and northwestern India, though without an illustration or indication of the precise type. Agrostis griffithiana is a member of a group within Agrostis characterized by hairy lemmas, and in Australia (Jacobs 2001) and New Zealand (Edgar 1995, Edgar & Connor 2000) this group is recognized as a separate genus, Lachnagrostis. In India, this group is represented by A. griffithiana, A. burmanica Bor (1958: 416), A. munroana Aitch. & Hemsl. in Aitchison (1882: 192), A. pilosula Trinius (1841: 372), and A. schmidii (Hooker 1896: 264) Bor (1960: 389) (Hooker 1896, Bor 1960). Most species from this group are still poorly known with regard to their nomenclature, delimitation, distribution and ecology. Two of these species, A. munroana and A. pilosula are known to be polymorphic (Hooker 1896, Bor 1954, 1960, Bhattacharya & Jain 1985). Selected specimens of both of these have been used as the basis for this study.

This paper presents typification and a new synonymy for Agrostis griffithiana. An amended circumscription, illustrations, and up-to-date distribution information are also presented.