A new combination in Alkekengi (Solanaceae) for the Flora of China

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The genus Physalis Linnaeus (1753: 182) is a medium-sized genus in the family Solanaceae Jussieu (1789: 124). It includes about 75 New World species and one Eurasian species, P. alkekengi Linnaeus (1753: 183), the generic lectotype (Britton & Brown 1913). Recently, several phylogenetic analyses focusing on Physalis and related taxa strongly supported the monophyly of the morphologically typical New World species, characterized by unlobed and yellow flowers. Physalis alkekengi represents a divergent clade characterized by somewhat lobed, white corollas and brilliant red-orange fruiting calyces (Whitson & Manos 2005; Olmstead et al. 2008). In order to emphasize the monophyly and morphological homogeneity of the New World species and decrease nomenclatural disruption, the genus Physalis was proposed for conservation with a conserved type, P. pubescens Linnaeus, to represent the New World species (Whitson 2011). The Eurasian P. alkekengi was suggested to be placed in a monotypic genus Alkekengi Miller (1754: AL) typified with A. officinarum Moench (1802: 177). This proposal was subsequently recommended for acceptance by the Nomenclature Committee for Vascular Plants (Applequist 2012).

Physalis alkekengi var. franchetii (Masters) Makino (1908: 34) is a garden variety and commonly cultivated in China, Japan, South Korea and sometimes in Europe (Master 1894; Zhang et al. 1994). It is very similar to Physalis alkekengi var. alkekengi in corolla shape and calyx color, but differs mainly by its glabrescent fruiting calyces more than 3 cm wide and distinct spots at the corolla base (Zhang et al. 1994). During the revision of the “Catalogue of Life China”, it was noticed that this variety had not yet been transferred to Alkekengi. Accordingly, the following new combination is proposed.

Alkekengi officinarum Moench var. franchetii (Mast.) R.J. Wang, comb. nov.

Basionym: Physalis franchetii Masters (1894: 434, f. 57), as “francheti”

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References


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