
The cultivated forms of *Eupatorium cannabinum* L. (*Asteraceae*)

C.M. WHITEHOUSE

Botany Department, RHS Garden Wisley

Although *Eupatorium cannabinum* is usually considered more of a weed than a garden plant, it is nevertheless attractive in its appropriate place and a few more garden-worthy forms have been selected over the years. The two oldest of these are a white-flowered form and a double-flowered form, but investigation into the correct names for these forms has revealed a rather confused nomenclatural history.

Eupatorium cannabinum ‘Album’

The white-flowered form is currently referred to in the *RHS Plant Finder* (Lord *et al.*, 2006) as the cultivar ‘Album’. This name appears to be based upon a botanical variety described by Silva Tarouca (1913). However, it is not the earliest description of a white-flowered *Eupatorium cannabinum*. Voss (1894) described this colour variation at the rank of form, using the epithet *albiflorum*. This was later recombined by Bergmans (1939) at the rank of variety, but being later than Silva Tarouca’s epithet it does not have priority when the two names are considered synonymous. It is not known where Voss’s types might be (Stafleu & Cowan, 1986), if any ever existed; and it is not likely that Silva Tarouca designated any either (Stafleu & Cowan, 1985), but these two validly published names are the correct epithets at their respective ranks for what appears to be identical taxa. The *International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants* (ICNCP; Brickell *et al.*, 2004) states that under such circumstances the earliest name, irrespective of rank, should be used (Art. 26.1). However, this article is qualified with a condition that this is only in the case where there has been “continued varied and competing use”. In this example, current usage appears to have been almost entirely consistent in the employment of ‘Album’ as the cultivar epithet. On the other hand, the white-flowered *E. cannabinum* is perfectly fertile and produces at least some offspring that are also white (A. Leslie, *pers. comm.*); the cultivar ‘Not Quite White’ is also known to come true from seed (Castle, 2000) and white-flowered

forms do occur occasionally in wild populations (Sell & Murrell, 2006). Therefore, it is recommended here that its treatment as a botanical form is much more appropriate, in which case the epithet *albiflorum* is to be used. The opportunity is also taken to select the specimen from the recent trial at Wisley to neotypify the name.

***Eupatorium cannabinum* 'Flore Pleno'**

The double-flowered form of *Eupatorium cannabinum* has been listed by the *The Plant Finder* (now *RHS Plant Finder*) as 'Flore Pleno' since 1990 (Philip, 1990; Lord *et al.*, 2006). However, prior to this date the earliest editions of *The Plant Finder* had used the name 'Plenum' and this is the name adopted by a number of other current publications (e.g. Cullen *et al.*, 2000; Hoffman & Geers, 2005). A comparison of the usage of the two epithets shows that there has been "continued varied and competing use" and it is important to establish the earliest valid epithet.

The first use of the epithet *plenum* as a botanical variety appears to be by Chittenden (1951). However, if this is the earliest use, then this epithet has never been validly published according to the Botanical Code (*ICBN*) as it lacks any description in Latin and so is contrary to Article 36.1. According to Article 19.7 of the *ICNCP*, It is nevertheless, being pre-1959, still permissible as a cultivar epithet if no valid botanical epithet exists.

The earliest use of the epithet *flore pleno* appears to be by Silva Tarouca (1913). Unfortunately, in that publication it was abbreviated to just "fl. pl.". Although this is probably unambiguous in its meaning, it is questionable as to whether it was validly published according to the *ICBN*. (It could be argued that there is some precedence for permitting expansion of abbreviations in specific epithets following established custom under Article 23.8).

If neither epithet is validly published according to the *ICBN*, then the earliest one should be used, in which case 'Flore Pleno' does indeed appear to be the correct epithet. However, there are two validly published botanical epithets available for the double-flowered form: Bergmans (1924) described it as var. *pleniflorum*, and seven years later it was given another name, var. *ligulosum*, by Wehrhahn (1931). Both authors referred to the horticultural name *flore pleno* in their synonymy, indicating that they had the same taxon in mind

and rendering the later name illegitimate, under Articles 52.1 and 52.2(e). According to Articles 19.6 and 19.7 (*ICNCP*), 'Pleniflorum' should therefore be the correct epithet. However, there still exists the possibility that the botanical variety *flore-pleno* (correctly hyphenated according to Article 60.9 *ICBN*) was validly published in an obscure publication or nursery catalogue prior to 1924. (If this was so, var. *pleniflorum* would also become illegitimate, as it includes the variety as a synonym.) It is therefore wise to retain the epithet 'Flore-pleno' until a very thorough search of appropriate publications around that time can be conducted. Conservation of this epithet is also strongly recommended to maintain the name in the event that a valid publication can never be found.

Unlike the white-flowered form referred to above, the double-flowered form is completely sterile (a benefit in the garden as it does not seed itself around) and can only be propagated clonally. Therefore, the rank of cultivar is still the most appropriate treatment for this form.

Variegated *Eupatorium cannabinum*

In addition to the cultivars and forms mentioned above, two variegated cultivars are listed in the *RHS Plant Finder*. 'Spraypaint' was discovered by Martin Cragg-Barber on the south side of a ditch on the back road between Hullavington and Kingway, Wiltshire. It is described by him as having "yellow splashes on leaf". This appears to be the only true variegated form of *E. cannabinum* available, as the cultivar supplied under the name 'Variegatum' to the recent RHS trial actually belongs to the Asian species *E. fortunei*. This epithet, whether applied to *E. cannabinum* or *E. fortunei*, is invalid, as it only appeared in the *RHS Plant Finder* in 1999 and 'Spraypaint' is the only variegated form appearing in the literature before then.

Synonymised list of cultivars and forms

Eupatorium cannabinum L. forma *albiflorum* Voss, Vilmorin's *Blumengärtnerei* 1: 446 (1894). Type not known. Neotype designated here: Trial of *Eupatorium*, trial number 12, sent by Monksilver Nursery, collected 10 August 2005 (**WSY**, neo.).

Syn. *E. cannabinum* L. var. *album* Silva Tar.: 175 (1913); H.R. Wehrh.: 1021 (1931); Bonstedt: 506 (1932); Nobis: 27 (1951). Type not known.

E. cannabinum L. var. *albiflorum* (Voss) Bergmans: 336 (1939)

E. cannabinum 'Album'; Jelitto & Schacht: 188 (1963); Jelitto, Schacht & Fessler: 235 (1985); Trehane: 192 (1989); Huxley: 244 (1992); Hoffman & Geers: 137 (2005)

Flowers white.

E. cannabinum f. *albiflorum* 'Not Quite White'; Castle: 3 (2000)
Fluffy grey-white flower clusters that are blush in bud.

E. cannabinum 'Flore-pleno'; Cumming & Lee: 163 (1960); Trehane: 192 (1989); Huxley: 244 (1992).

Syn. *E. cannabinum* L. var. *flore-pleno* Silva Tar.: 175 (1913), as "fl. pl."; Nobis: 27 (1951), *nom. inval.*

E. cannabinum L. var. *pleniflorum* Bergmans: 221 (1924). Type not known.

E. cannabinum L. var. *ligulosum* H.R. Wehrh.: 1021 (1931); Bonstedt: 506 (1932), *nom. illegit.* Type not known.

E. cannabinum L. var. *plenum* Chitt.: 793 (1951), *nom. inval.*; Perry: 149 (1957); Bloom: 100 (1960)

E. cannabinum 'Plenum'; Jelitto & Schacht: 188 (1963); Thomas: 142 (1976); Jelitto, Schacht & Fessler: 235 (1985); Cullen *et al.*: 664 (2000); Hoffman & Geers: 209 (2005)

Height 1.4m. Leaves mid green (137A–C); stem grey green, heavily flushed dull grey purple, much greyer than 187A except at base of petioles, pubescent, thickly covered with very short curled hairs. Inflorescence composed entirely of greyed deep pink phyllaries (186A–B). Sterile.

E. cannabinum 'Spraypaint'. Nomenclatural Standard: Sent by Martin Cragg-Barber, 7 September 2006, barcode WSY0096106 (**WSY**)

Creamy irregular splashes on leaves. Stem erect, round, green (145B), some faint reddish-brown markings, white downy hair. Stem leaves divided at base into three occasionally four, middle lobe larger than the others, lanceolate, toothed, variegated, green (137A, 149C–D), cream ($\pm 11D$), densely hairy especially on lower surface mid-vein.

REFERENCES

- Bergmans, J.** (1924). *Vaste Planten en Rotsheesters*. Haarlem: N.V. Drukkerij.
- Bergmans, J.** (1939). *Vaste Planten en Rotsheesters*. Edn 2. Tegelen: J.H. Faassen-Hekkens.
- Bloom, A.** (1960). *Perennials for trouble-free gardening*. London: Faber & Faber Ltd.
- Bonstedt, C.** (1932). *Pareys Blumengärtnerei* 2. Berlin: Paul Parey.
- Brickell, C.D., Baum, B.R., Hetterscheid, W.L.A., Leslie, A.C., McNeill, J., Trehane, P., Vrugtman, F. & Wiersema, J.H.** (eds) (2004). International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants, Seventh Edition. *Acta Horticulturae* **647**: 1–123, i–xxi.
- Castle, R.** (2000). *Alternatives Plant List 2000*. Yorkley Wood: Alternatives Nursery.
- Chittenden, F.J.** (ed.). (1951). *The Royal Horticultural Society Dictionary of Gardening*. UK: Oxford University Press.
- Cullen, J., Alexander, J.C.M., Brickell, C.D., Edmondson, J.R., Green, P.R., Heywood, V.H., Jørgensen, P.-M., Jury, S.L., Knees, S.G., Maxwell, H.S., Miller, D.M., Robson, N.K.B., Walters, S.M., & Yeo, P.F.** (eds). (2000). *European Garden Flora* 6. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cumming, R.W. & Lee, R.E.** (1960). *Contemporary Perennials*. New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Hoffman, M.H.A. & Geers, F.** (eds). (2005). *Naamlijst van Vaste Planten 2005–2010*. Edn 5. Boskoop: Praktijkonderzoek Plant & Omgeving BV.
- Huxley, A.J.** (ed.). (1992). *The New Royal Horticultural Society Dictionary of Gardening* 2. UK: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Jelitto, L. & Schacht, W.** (1963). *Die Freiland-Schmuckstauden*. Edn 2. Stuttgart: Eugen Ulmer.
- Jelitto, L., Schacht, W. & Fessler, A.** (1985). *Die Freiland-Schmuckstauden*. Edn 3. Stuttgart: Eugen Ulmer.
- Lord, W.A., Armitage, J., Cubey, J., Lancaster, N. & Whitehouse, C.** (eds). (2006). *RHS Plant Finder 2006–2007*. London: Dorling Kindersley.

- Nobis, F.** (1951). *Die Freiland-Schmuckstauden. IV Echinops bis Kniphofia (Tritoma)*. Stuttgart: Eugen Ulmer.
- Perry, F.** (1957). *Collins Guide to Border Plants*. London: Collins.
- Sell, P. & Murrell, G.** (2006). *Flora of Great Britain and Ireland 4*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Silva Tarouca, E.E.** (1913). *Unsere Freiland-Stauden*. Edn 2. Wien & Leipzig: F. Tempsky & G. Freytag.
- Stafleu, F.A. & Cowan, R.S.** (1985). *Taxonomic Literature V: Sal-Ste. Regnum Vegetabile 112*. Utrecht: Bohn, Scheltema & Holkema.
- Stafleu, F.A. & Cowan, R.S.** (1986). *Taxonomic Literature VI: Sti-Vuy. Regnum Vegetabile 115*. Utrecht: Bohn, Scheltema & Holkema.
- Thomas, G.S.** (1976). *Perennial Garden Plants or A Modern Florilegium*. London: J.M. Dent & Sons.
- Trehane, P.** (1989). *Index Hortensis: Perennials*. Wimborne: Quarterjack Publishing.
- Voss, A.** (1894). *Vilmorin's Blumengärtnerei 1*. Berlin: Paul Parey.
- Wehrhahn, H.R.** (1931). *Die Gartenstauden*. Berlin: Paul Parey.