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Monochoria korsakowii Regel & Maack (Pontederiaceae): a new plant to the rice fields of N. Italy

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Abstract

Vuille, Flora-Lise. 1985. *Monochoria korsakowii* Regel & Maack (Pontederiaceae): a new plant to the rice fields of N. Italy. Bot. Helv. 95: 323–324. *Monochoria korsakowii* Regel & Maack is recorded for the first time in western Europe.

The flora of the Italian rice fields, particularly the region around Vercelli and Novara, is very rich in aquatic and marsh species. Many have been introduced and are dependent for their existence on the cultivation of rice. Some already occupy very large ranges and have become pests (Cook 1985).

In September 1985 a new noteworthy plant was found in two rice fields, 20 km S.E. of Vercelli, near Candia Lomellina, Prov. Pavia, Reg. Lombardia. The new introduction is the plant generally called *Monochoria korsakowii* Regel & Maack. The exact identity is uncertain as the taxonomy of the genus *Monochoria* is somewhat confused and much in need of revision.

A small population of about 10–15 individuals of *M. korsakowii* Regel & Maack was found in two rice fields growing with scattered individuals of *Heteranthera limosa* (Sw.) Willd. (or perhaps *H. rotundifolia* (Kunth) Griseb.). The plants were flowering on exposed mud but probably germinated in standing water about 25 cm deep. Flowers do not apparently fully open but seed set was high.

Monochoria korsakowii Regel & Maack was originally described from near Ussuriysk, Sikhote-Alin, USSR and is a relatively local species extending into northern China, Korea and Japan. It is patristically related to *M. vaginalis* Presl, a widespread tropical species.

M. korsakowii Regel & Maack has already become established in rice fields along the northern part of the Black Sea (Chernoye More). It was first recorded there in 1932. Its distribution in S. W. Russia is summarized by Laktinov (1972). There is no evidence as to how this species reached Italy.

Voucher specimens are deposited in Zurich (Z)

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