

# Oenathe incrassans Bory & Chaub. (Apiaceae) : a distinctive plant of the Aegean region

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# Oenanthe incrassans Bory & Chaub. (Apiaceae), a distinctive plant of the Aegean region

Michael J. Y. Foley & Mervyn J. Southam

## Abstract

FOLEY, M. J. Y. & M. J. SOUTHAM (2007). *Oenanthe incrassans* Bory & Chaub. (Apiaceae), a distinctive plant of the Aegean region. *Candollea* 62: 125-130. In English, English and French abstracts.

*Oenanthe incrassans* Bory & Chaub. is often misidentified or placed under synonymy with *Oenanthe pimpinelloides* L. Its taxonomy and morphological separation from the latter species is discussed, a provisional distribution map provided, and a lectotype is designated.

## Key-words

APIACEAE – *Oenanthe* – Greece – Aegean – Taxonomy – Geographical distribution – Lectotypification

## Résumé

FOLEY, M. J. Y. & M. J. SOUTHAM (2007). *Oenanthe incrassans* Bory & Chaub. (Apiaceae), une plante caractéristique de la région égéenne. *Candollea* 62: 125-130. En anglais, résumés anglais et français.

*Oenanthe incrassans* Bory & Chaub. est souvent mal identifiée ou placée en synonymie de *Oenanthe pimpinelloides* L. Sa taxonomie et ses différences morphologiques avec cette dernière espèce sont discutées. Une carte de répartition est fournie et un lectotype est désigné.

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## Introduction

*Oenanthe incrassans* Bory & Chaub. is a little-known and frequently mis-identified plant, endemic to a limited area of the eastern Mediterranean with its centre of distribution in the Aegean; it is especially found on the central Greek mainland, the Peloponnese and Crete. Specimens have also been seen from the islands of Corfu, Kos, Naxos and Thassos and from European Turkey. It has also been recorded from the Ionian islands (Zakynthos and Kefalonia) and it is likely to occur also in other neighbouring areas. It is a plant of damp terrain and marshes at low to montane levels. At one locality in the northern Peloponnese near Steno Pangratiou (Fig. 1) it occurs in association with dense stands of *Equisetum telmateia* Ehrh.; also present are *Orobancha reticulata* Wallr., *Anacamptis laxiflora* (Lam.) R. M. Bateman & al. and several members of the *Cyperaceae*.

## Discussion

Although recognized as a distinct species in the past (e.g. BOISSIER (1872, 1888) sub *Oe. incrassata*, and by de HALÁCSY (1901)), most subsequent authors (e.g. COOK (1968), HEDGE & LAMOND (1972)) have sunk *Oe. incrassans* into synonymy under *Oe. pimpinelloides* L. Whilst it is rather distantly related to the latter, *Oe. incrassans* is distinct in possessing fewer rays in the umbel and having an overall far less delicate habit. When in fruit, the much more thickened rays and peduncle, the lack of involucre bracts and the longer fruits, all help to characterise it. Plants grown in England from seed collected near Patras, Peloponnese, were found to retain these morphological characters on cultivation. Although rarely collected with underground parts, a specimen from Crete (1899, *Baldacci* 21, BM) resembles *Oe. pimpinelloides* in having a similar characteristic root system of distant, ± fusiform-globose tubers. *Oenanthe pimpinelloides* itself is a very wide-ranging plant, occurring throughout much of western and southern Europe, eastwards to Georgia, the Caucasus, and Syria. However, *Oe. incrassans* is limited to the general area of the Aegean from where *Oe. pimpinelloides* is also known.

Two other poorly-understood southern Balkan taxa are sometimes considered to be related to, or conspecific with, *Oe. pimpinelloides* (and so perhaps by inference with *Oe. incrassans*); these are *Oe. thracica* Griseb. and *Oe. angulosa* Griseb. Typification of both has recently been effected by STRID (2000) but their taxonomy is in need of further investigation, since the type of *Oe. thracica* Griseb. would seem to be conspecific with *Oe. pimpinelloides* whilst that of *Oe. angulosa* Griseb. has leaves very similar to *Oe. silaifolia* M. Bieb. and may be a form of it.

The first published reference to *Oe. incrassans* (together with a detailed drawing of the plant) is that of BORY & CHAUBARD (1832) based on a collection made during the

famous exploratory visit to the Peloponnese led by Bory in 1829. Chaubard was not present on this expedition but bore much of the responsibility for the subsequent documentation of its botanical findings. The original locality from where *Oe. incrassans* was collected was stated (BORY & CHAUBARD, 1832) to be the “Forêt de Koubeh”. This is situated some distance to the east of modern Pírgos in the western Peloponnese although the precise locality, not nowadays known by its old Turkish name, has not been accurately identified.

In the Paris herbarium (P) there is a specimen of *Oe. incrassans* (Fig. 2) collected either by Bory himself or possibly his colleague Despréaux, which is simply labelled “Greece” but with no reference to it having been collected in the “Forêt de Koubeh”. This specimen, as well as the illustration given in the Bory & Chaubard publication (Fig. 3), are both potential type material. Unfortunately, the root system, a most useful taxonomic character in *Oenanthe*, is lacking in the preserved specimen (P) and is inaccurately shown in the illustration. However, the thickened rays are clearly illustrated in the latter but are either lost through damage or uncollected in the specimen. On balance, the illustration more accurately represents the plant as described and so this is now designated as the lectotype:

***Oenanthe incrassans*** Bory & Chaub., Exp. Sci. Morée, Bot.: 87. 1832.

≡ *Oenanthe incrassata* Bory & Chaub. in Chaub. & Bory, Nouv. Fl. Pélop.: 19. 1838 [nom. inval., var. orthogr.].

**Lectotypus** (hic designatus): Bory & Chaub., Exp. Sci. Morée, Bot.: tab. 8. 1835 (Fig. 3).

When the results of their expedition to the Peloponnese were re-published in the *Nouvelle flore du Péloponnèse et des Cyclades* (CHAUBARD & BORY, 1838) the plant was erroneously named *Oe. incrassata*, an orthographic error. Although the name is invalid, it has been perpetuated on some of the older herbarium sheets (there are at least two assigned as such by Chaubard in P). Whilst *Oe. pimpinelloides* is known from Asiatic Turkey (HEDGE & LAMOND, 1972) no specimens of *Oe. incrassans* from there have yet been seen, although its presence might be inferred from the authors' placement of it as a synonym of *Oe. pimpinelloides*. The only specimen of *Oe. incrassans* seen from the *Flora of Turkey* area is from the off-shore island of Kos.

*Oenanthe incrassans* is an under-collected plant and should be looked for in suitable habitat elsewhere in the south Balkan and Aegean area so that a clearer impression of its overall distribution can be established. A provisional map based upon material seen in the field, on herbarium specimens, and on localities cited by de HALÁCSY (1901) who was very familiar with the plant, is given in Figure 4.

The genus *Oenanthe* in much of the southern Balkans is in need of a detailed taxonomic study, although *Oe. incrassans* itself is now quite well known. Despite what might appear to be a drastic measure, if specimens are to be of real taxonomic value, they should be collected with their root tubers attached and entire.

*Selected specimens examined.* – **TURKEY (European):** Edirne, Kesan, 6.VII.1982, *Nydegger 17003* (E), as *Oe. thracica*.

**GREECE:** “Greece”, s.d., *Leo s.n.* (E); “Greece”, *Bory s.n.*, and also as *Oe. incrassata* (P, images); **Central:** Boeotia – ad fl. Assopos, 4.VII.1930, *Guiol N1336* (BM); **Eastern:** Rodopis, Komotinis, 5.6.1991, *Strid & Tan 31319* (E); **Peloponnese:** s.loc., s.d., *Bory s.n.* (P); Patras, VI.1893, *Grimburg 485* (E);

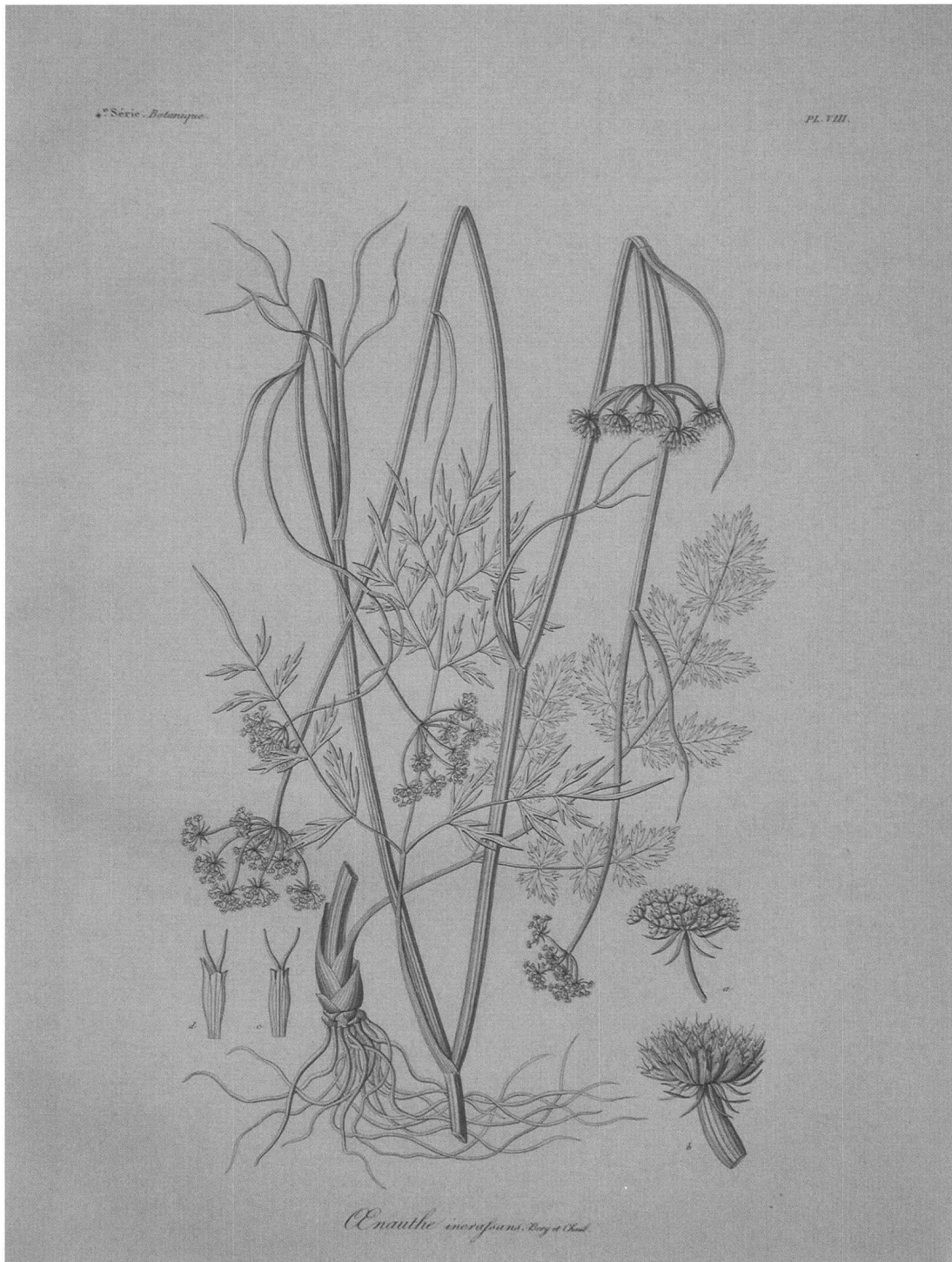
specimen cultivated in England ex seed collected VIII.1989 from roadside verge near Patras, 15.V.1993, *Hanson & Southam* (BM); Steno Pangratiou, 11.V.2004, *Foley 2010* (E); **Corfu:** “Insulae Corcyra”, VII.1877, *Ball s.n.* (E); Kastrades, 9.V.1896 & 4.VI.1896, *Baenitz s.n.* (E, 2 sheets); Ipsos to Ag. Markos, 16.VII.1972, *Davis 54531* (E); **Crete:** E of Phalassarna, Crete, 20.IV.1973, *Burbridge 318* (E); s.loc., 5.VI.1899, *Baldacci 21* (BM); Kissamos, 2.V.1884 & 2.VII. 1884, *Reverchon 247/2811* (BM), as *Oe callosa*; [locality indeciph.], 25.VI.1942, *Rechinger f. 14050* (BM); La Canée, lieux humides, 19.V.1883, *Reverchon 2812* (BM); Potamies, V.1846, *de Heldreich s.n.* (E); **Kos:** between Asphenidou & Ziparion, marshy slope, drying out, 10.X.1981, *Davis 67935* (E); **Naxos:** Kinidaros, 17.VI.1898, *Leonis 167* (E); **Thasos:** Limenas, 19.V, *Halácsy s.n.* (BM).



**Fig. 1.** – *Oenanthe incrassans* Bory & Chaub. in a wet area near Steno Pangratiou, Peloponnese, Greece.



**Fig 2.** – Specimen of *Oenanthe incrassans* Bory & Chaub. collected on Bory's expedition to the Peloponnese in 1829 (P).  
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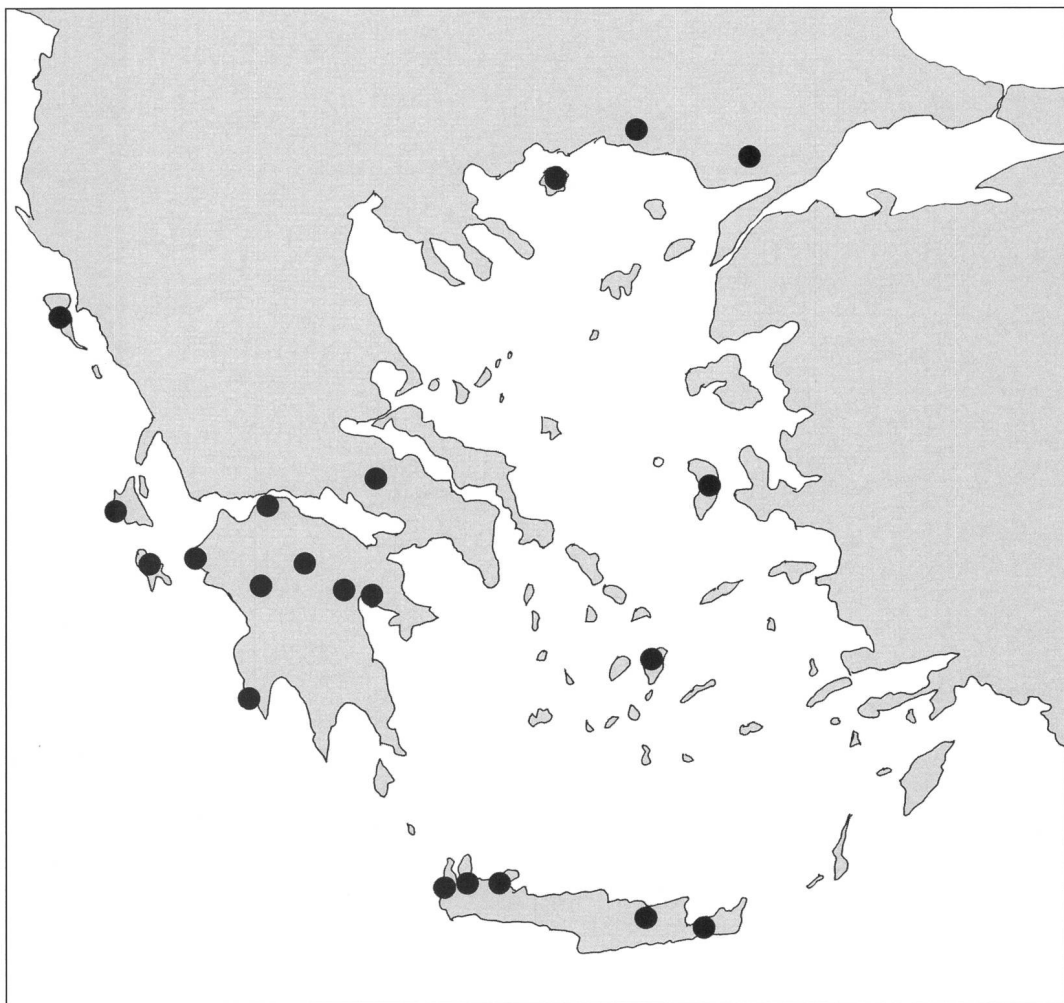
**Fig 3.** – Illustration of *Oenanthe incrassans* Bory & Chaub. in Bory & Chaubard's *Expédition scientifique de Morée, Botanique: tab. 8*. 1835. [Library of the Conservatoire et Jardin botaniques, Genève]

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**Fig. 4.** – Provisional distribution map of *Oenanthe incrassans* Bory & Chaub. in the Aegean based on live material seen, herbarium specimens, and the data of de HALÁCSY (1901) who knew the plant well.