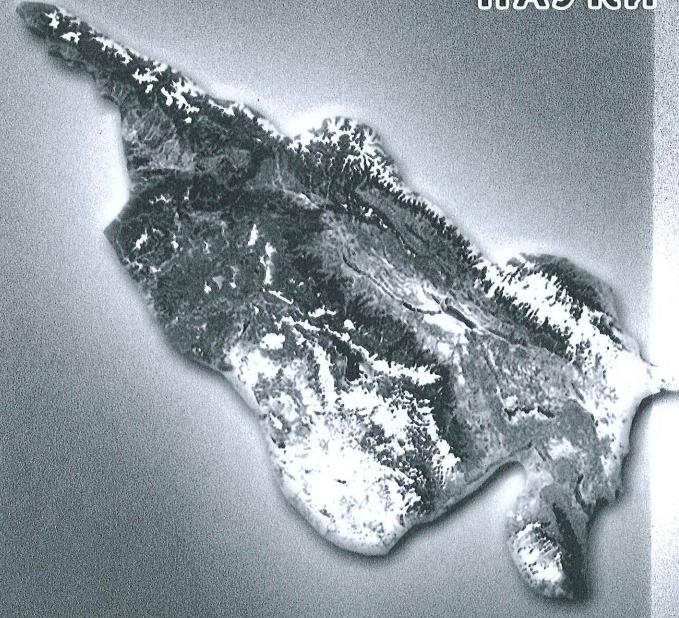
ISSN 1512-1887

# ANNALS OF AGRARIAN SCIENCE

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# ANNALS OF AGRARIAN SCIENCE

The journal was founded in July 2003 The journal is published quarterly ISSN 1512-1887

The journal publishes original theoretical and experimental scientific contributions in the fields of soil science, agroecology, agroengineering, agronomy, veterinary science and animal husbandry, forestry, technology of processing agricultural products and agricultural economics, preferentially focusing on the Southern Caucasus. Contribution from the other world regions are also welcome.

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FORESTRY

ЛЕСОВОДСТВО

# VACCINIUM MYRTILLUS VAR. ARTVINENSE - A NEW TAXON FOR THE FLORA OF TURKEY

O. Eminagaoglu\*, H. A. Akpulat\*\*

\*Artvin Coruh University

Artvin, 08000, Turkey; eminagaoglu@hotmail.com
\*\*Cumhuriyet University

Sivas, 58140, Turkey; askinakpulat@hotmail.com Received: 04.01.10; accepted: 22.02.10

Vaccinium myrtillus L. var. artvinense Akpulat & Eminagaoglu var. nova (Ericaceae) from Artvin district is described and illustrated. Diagnostic characters, a description and taxonomic comments on the subspecies are given and compared with the closely related V. myrtillus. The geographical distribution of the new variety and related species are given. IUCN threatened category and observations on the population are noted.

## INTRODUCTION

The Ericaceae (the heath family) consists of about 110 genera and 4000 species. Abundant and widespread throughout the temperate regions of the Northern and Southern hemispheres, it is a conspicuous element in the subarctic circumpolar vegetation and in subtropical and tropical mountains. The genus Vaccinium is most abundant as an epiphyte in the tropics of the New World, Malaysia, and southeastern Asia. There are about 150 to 450 species (the number varies by authority) of deciduous or evergreen shrubs (rarely trees or vines) in Vaccinium. The majority of species occur eastern Asia & Papua New Guinea [1-3].

Many species of *Vaccinium* are rhizomatous, thus forming multi-stemmed, rounded to upright shrubs or small trees ranging in height from 30 to 50 cm. Cranberry forms a dense evergreen ground cover about 15 cm in height. Several species of *Vaccinium* are valued for their edible fruits. Historically, Native Americans consumed blueberries fresh or dried them for winter consumption. In addition, they steeped the leaves, flowers, and rhizomes in hot water and used the tea to treat colic in infants, to induce labor, and as a diuretic [1,3].

The currently accepted scientific name of dwarf bilberry is *Vaccinium myrtillus* L. [4]. It is placed within the section *Myrtillus* [3,5,6].

The *Vaccinium* genus is taxonomically complex. Hybridization and polyploidy make delineation of species difficult [6, 7].

According to recent studies on the Turkish Vaccinium, this genus is represented by 4 taxa that are V. vitisidaea, V. uliginosum, V. myrtillus, V. arctostaphylos in Turkey [8].

# OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

The new taxon was collected during the field studies of the project titled "The Phytosociological and Ecological Research on the Vegetation Structure of Sahara-Karagol National Park and its Nearest Environs" submitted by TUBITAK from Savsat, around Artvin, North-East Anatolia, Turkey, in the year of 2002 and deposited in CUFH. (Figure 1). This new variety was morphologically compared with related species, *V. myrtillus*. Authorities for all cited plant names are given according to Authors of Plant Names [9].

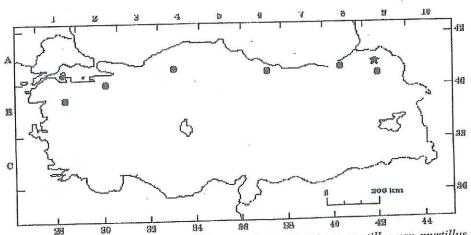


Fig. 1. Distribution of Vaccinum myrtillus var. artvinense (\*) and Vaccinum myrtillus var. myrtillus (\*) in Turkey

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Taxonomical Treatment

Vaccinium myrtillus L. var. artvinense Akpulat & Eminagaoglu, var. nova (Fig. 2)

Type: Turkey. A9 Artvin, Savsat, Karagol-Sahara National Park, subalpine vegetation, 15. vii. 2000, 2100 m, 41 13 17 N- 42 29 18 E, ÖE 2279 (holo. CUFH; iso ISTE, ACUH).

A9 Ardahan, Posof, Alabalık Village, 2400 m,13. viii. 2006, 41 22 46 N- 42 37 19 E, ÖE 5091; A8 Artvin, Merkez, Vezirköy Yaylası, 2400 m, 10.07.2007, 41 17 42 N- 41 56 15 E, ÖE 7379 (ACUH).

Diagnosis: Afinis V. myrtillus L. Sed ab foliis longis 15-35 x 10-20 mm (non 19-27 x 7-11 mm), fructus longus 3-4 mm (non 7-9 mm), differt.

Description: Deciduous shrublet to 45 cm; stem angled, leaves shortly petiolate, lamina ovate to elliptic, glandular hairs beneath, 1.5-3.5 x 1-2 cm, margin serrulate with reddish glandular hair. Flower single, corolla pale greenish-pink, or greenish-white, urceolate, 3-4, 5 x 5 mm. Fruit dark purple, glaucous, 3-4 mm. Fl-june, Fr-september.

Flowering and fruiting: June-September (subalpine vegetation, Birch forest, with Betula pendula Roth,

Rhododendron caucasicum Pall. and Juniperus communis L. var. saxatilis Pall., 1800-2400 m a.s.l.).

Distribution: Northeastern Anatolia (Artvin), Euro-Siberian element.

Conservation Status

The new subspecies is an endemic taxon known from three separate localities. Extent of occurrence is about 20.000 km<sup>2</sup>, area of occupancy about 2000 km<sup>2</sup>; therefore, it should be considered as VU [10].

Ecology

This new variety grows on high forest and subalpine zone, characteristic plants such as Vaccinium uliginosum L., Rhododendron caucasicum Pall., Aquilegia olympica Boiss., Rubus caucasicus Focke, Veronica gentianoides Vahl, Solidago virgaurea L. subsp. alpestris (Waldst. & Kit.) Gaudin, Oxalis acetosella L., Stachys macrantha (C.Koch) Stearn, Daphne glomerata Lam., Sedum tenellum M.Bieb, S. spurium M.Bieb, Campanula tridentata Schreber, C. aucheri A.DC., Poa longifolia Trin., Pedicularis nordmanniana Bunge, Thymus praecox Opiz subsp. grossheimii (Ronniger) Jalas var. grossheimii, Rumex tuberosus L. subsp. horizontalis (C.Koch) Rech., Erigeron caucasicus Stev. subsp. caucasicus.

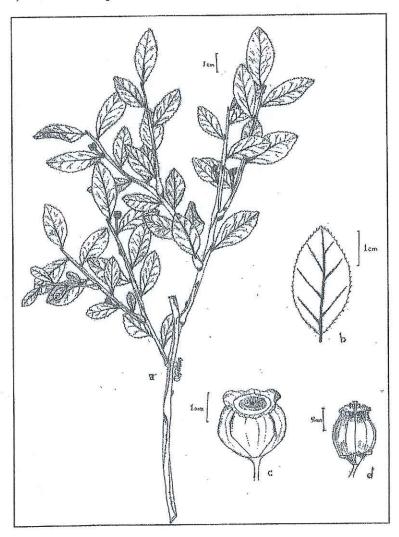


Fig. 2. Vaccinum myrtillus var. artvinense (from type).-a: Habit.-b: fruit.-c: flowers.-d: leaf

Vaccinum myrtillus L. var. artvinense Akpulat & Eminagaoglu is related to V. myrtillus L. Some of the taxonomic characters that distinguish V. myrtillus L. var.

artvinense from the related species of Vaccinum are given in table 1.

Table. Diagnostic characters of Vaccinum myrtillus var. artvinense and V. myrtillus

Characters	V. myrtillus Misch. artvinense	V. myrtillus var. myrtillus
Leaf size (mm)	15-35 x 10-20	19-27 x 7-1 D
Fruit diameter (mm)	3-4	7-9
Fruit colurs	Dark purple, glaucous	Black, with a blue bloom

This new subspecies is clearly different from Vaccinum myrtillus in that it has smaller fruit 3-4 mm (not 7-9), larger leave size 15-35 x 10-20 mm (not 19-27 x 7-11 mm) and leaf apices obtuse (not acute).

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The authors would like to thanks to Oktay Göktaş for the illustration and to TUBITAK (199 O 061) for its financial support and to Zurab Manvelidze for his helping.

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