

Plantae Occidentales Selectae

Many thanks for gift and loan (returned herewith) of A. oophorus from the Belted Range. Your material really does have the technical characters of var. clokeyanus, including low ovule number, and I concur in your identification. Whether the taxon is any good is another matter. When I described it it seemed strongly isolated geographically, but this has now faded.

I was in the foothills of the Belted
R. C. BARNEBY

[over]

Range before there was any Base there. A magical spot, that then seemed quite out of the 20th century.

Many thanks for the specimen, which is much appreciated.

Rupert Barneby

24.ix.95

Letter 1. Rupert Barneby to Frank J. Smith, 24 September 1995.

16 March 1998

Rupert Barneby
The New York Botanical Garden
Bronx, New York 10458

Dear Rupert,

I am sending you a collection of *Astragalus oophorus* from the Quinn Canyon Range in Nye County, Nevada. This plant was collected by Michael Curto in June of 1997. I would like to know what variety you would place this in. My initial reaction was that this could be an intermediate between *A. oophorus* var. *loncoalyx* and *A. oophorus* var. *oophorus*.

I am currently working on a status report for *A. oophorus* var. *clokeyanus* and I was wondering what your current thoughts are on the taxonomic status of this variety. In 1996 I sent you a specimen from the Belted Range in Nevada and you determined the collection to be *A. oophorus* var. *clokeyanus*. But you did give the impression in your note (Enclosed) that *A. oophorus* var. *clokeyanus* may not be a valid taxon. In 1996 a specimen collected by personnel from the Nevada Test Site (NTS) was sent to Stan Welsh and he also determined the collection to be the Clokey eggvetch.

In May of 1997 personnel at the NTS conducted a search for *A. oophorus* var. *clokeyanus* on the base and found a number of new sites. I visited the NTS on May 21 and 22 and went to some of these sites. At each of the sites I counted ovules because only a few flowers were seen at this time. The range of ovules were from 24 to 35. The few flowers I did see did fit the description of *A. oophorus* var. *clokeyanus*.

A population of the Clokey eggvetch was found by David Anderson of the NTS on the Nellis Ranges in the Kawich Range at Cedar Pass. I went to this site on June 1 and all of the plants were in fruit. The number of ovules for this population ranged from 35 to 43. I assume that when David Anderson found the population on May 1 the plants were in flower and the flower size and calyx length fit the description of *A. oophorus* var. *clokeyanus*. In some ways I believe the variety is a valid taxon because of the following: the small flower size and calyx length appear to be consistent; the geographic range is consistent with other populations of the species. If the sites of the Clokey eggvetch were plotted the distribution of this variety would probably stand alone without any overlap with *A. oophorus* var. *oophorus*. It appears the further north you go, the higher the ovule number. Enclosed please find the graph of the ovule counts at 5 sites of the Clokey eggvetch.

I would appreciate if you could take the time to help me understand the taxonomy of *Astragalus oophorus*. I do want to say I have admired all the work you have accomplished over the years.

Sincerely,

Frank J. Smith
P.O. Box 422
Millville, UT 84326
(435) 752-3534

Letter 2. Frank J. Smith to Rupert Barneby, 16 March 1998.



THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

Dr. Frank J. Smith,
Box 422, Millville, UT

28 April 1998

Dear Frank: Thank you for your interesting message about Astragalus oophorus and for the gift and loans of Curto 1730 from the Quinn Canyon Range. This is a most welcome addition to our herbarium; the two duplicates are on their way back to UTC. It seems to me that this collection is best referred to var. oophorus, not to var. lonchocalyx, which typically has a much narrower and hence proportionately longer calyx. The differences are slight, and I may have exaggerated their systematic value.

Thank you for data on ovule-number in A. oophorus clokeyanus, which does seem distinct nevertheless in the small corolla and segregation to the southwest of the main area of the species. It is good to have the range of this minor taxon worked out in detail. I filed your letter with the specimen, which will be handy for future students of the group. My best thanks for all -

Yours sincerely

Rupert Barneby

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Letter 3. Rupert Barneby to Frank J. Smith, 28 April 1998.