

Veronicastrum wulingense

Veronicastrum wulingense, known as wu ling fu shui cao (Chinese: 武陵扶水草), is a herbaceous plant in the plantain family Plantaginaceae. It is endemic to a small geographic range in China.[1] The perennial herb is from the genus *Veronicastrum*, a genus that is used in traditional Chinese medicine.[1] Stemming from the family Plantaginaceae, there are close to twenty species of *Veronicastrum*, with a primary geographic location in East Asia, though there is one species, *Veronicastrum virginicum*[2] that is endemic to North America.[1]

The species was found in the Pingbaying National Forest Park, Xianfeng County, Southwestern Hubei, China, in June 2021, close to rocks, along the walkways of a broadleaf forest. Comparisons to other *Veronicastrum* species found that it was indeed a new species.[1]

Comparison of morphology was done between the new *Veronicastrum* species and other related *Veronicastrum* species based on the Flora of China, the Flora of Taiwan, and the Flora of Japan.[1] The new species was also virtually examined in the world's major herbarium in China.[1] The botanists compared twelve other *Veronicastrum* species from different areas for validation of the species type.[1] Specimens of *Pseudolysimachion spicatum* (L.) Opiz in China were also collected and prepared.[1] A specific morphological comparison between *V. wulingense* and the similar species *V. liukuense* (Ohwi) T.Yamaz. was done to validate the characteristics of the new species.[1] The specimens of the *Veronicastrum wulingense* are in the herbarium of Wuhan Botanical Garden (HIB), Chinese Academy of Sciences.[1] DNA extraction and sequencing was done on thirteen samples to construct a phylogenetic tree to show where the new taxon in *Veronicastrum* should stand.[1]

Veronicastrum wulingense was observed flowering from June to July and produces fruit from August to October.[1]

The species was first described in 2023.[1] As of April 2023[update], it was not listed in the International Plant Names Index.[3] The epithet *wulingense* refers to the Wuling Shan Region, where *Veronicastrum wulingense* is located and it has been given the Chinese name wu ling fu shui cao (Chinese: 武陵扶水草).[1]

