

Gymnocalycium spegazzinii

Britton & Rose

First Description (Britton & Rose)

The Cactaceae Vol. III (1922)

Gymnocalycium spegazzinii nom. nov.

Depressed, globular, 6cm high, 14cm in diameter, greyish-green ribs 13, broad and low, rounded on the margin; areoles elliptic, spines usually 7, subulate, rigid, appressed to the ribs, sometimes recurved, greyish-brown, 2 to 2.5cm long flowers 7cm long; inner perianth-segments more or less rose-tinted; filaments and style violaceous; stigma lobes 16, white to rose-colored; scales on the ovary few, broad.

Type locality: La Viña, province of Salta, Argentina. Distribution: Known only from the type locality.

As this plant requires a new name, it gives me great pleasure to dedicate it to such an enthusiastic cactus student as Dr. Carlos Spegazzini, of La Plata, Argentina.

Etymology

Named for Prof. Dr. Carlos Spegazzini (1858-1926), Italian born pharmacist who worked as a botanist in Buenos Aires.

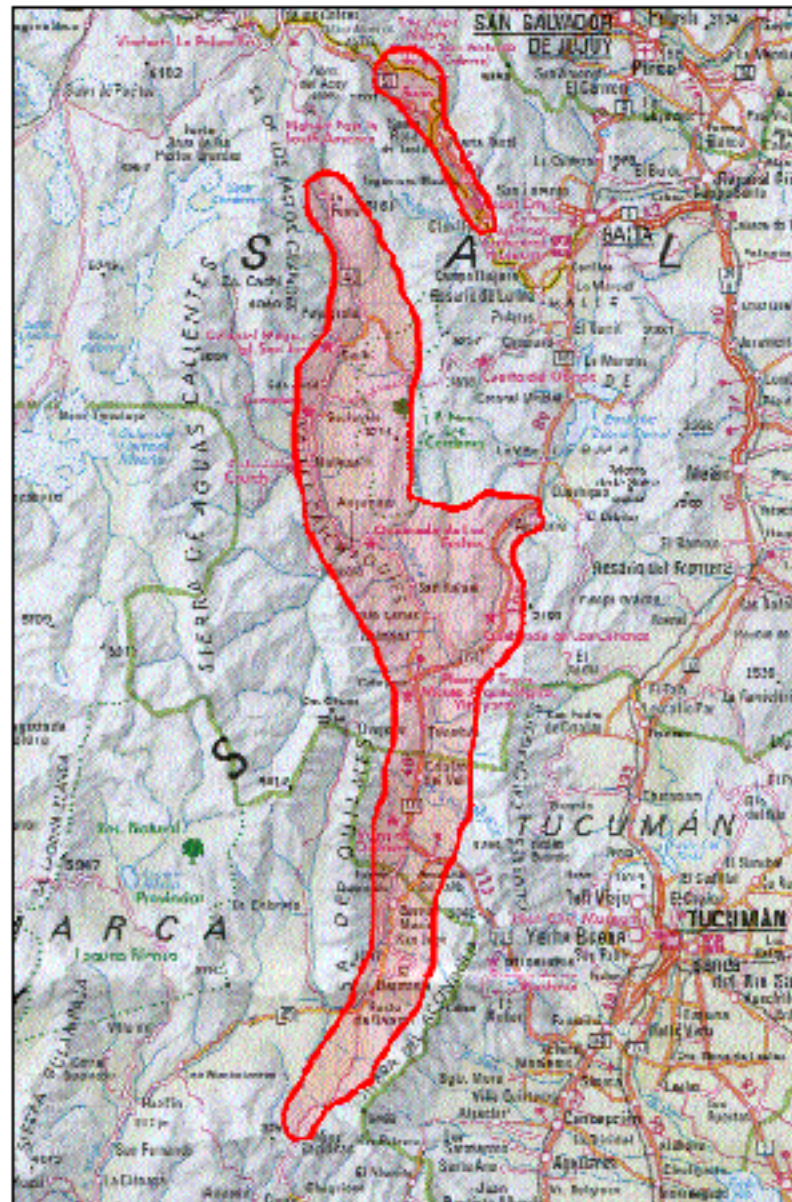
Distribution

Originally said to come only from the type locality which Spegazzini (1925c) tells us is rocky slopes of the Valle de Lerma, near La Viña, Salta. It is not clear exactly where this location is. There is a town La Viña on Route 68 south of Salta City but, perhaps more likely, is the small resort of 'La Viña' near to Rosario de Lerma, south west of Salta City.

In fact, the species has a large distribution area of almost 500km by 60km covering different types of habitats and many populations which often have recognisably distinct characteristics. It was Piltz (1977) who first defined the extent of its natural range. It is a high altitude species recorded from 1600 to 2800m.

The whole distribution range is within Argentina. The most southerly locality can be found at Capillitas at 2,700m, just north of Andalgalá, while the northern limit is in the Quebrada del Toro, Prov. Salta at about 3000m. The plants from the latter place are particularly spiny and seedlings from this population retain their tendency to grow longspines in cultivation.

After the long dry winter and spring, the plants are drawn down almost level with the ground. This phenomenon is also seen in plants growing in the Quebrada Cafayate, where in drought conditions the spines appear like patterns in the flat sand.



(Fig. XX) The pictures opposite show the appearance of plants after the arrival of the summer rains.

Map 61
The distribution of
G. spegazzinii in
Argentina

Conservation Status

Least Concern. It is regrettable that this species, because of its slow growth, is still collected from the wild by enthusiasts. It is, however, probably not a great threat to its survival because of its widespread distribution, much of it far from roads.

History

The first attempt to name this species was by Spegazzini in 1905 when he described a plant from La Viña, prov. Salta, as *Echinocactus lorincatus*. Unfortunately, this name had already been used

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Fig. 446 *G. spegazzinii* Bailey, n. sp. in habitat. a. Afancko, Quebrada del Toro, Prov. Salta, Argentina

Photo © Geoff Bailey



Fig. 447 *G. spegazzinii* Bailey, n. sp. in habitat. a. Amalchá del Valle, Prov. Tucumán, Argentina

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Fig. 448 *G. spegazzinii* Bailey, n. sp. in habitat. a. Tolombón, south of Cafayate, Prov. Salta near the border with Prov. Tucumán, Argentina

Photo © Geoff Bailey



Fig. 449 *G. spegazzinii* Bailey, n. sp. in habitat. a. El Obelisco, Quebrada de Cafayate, Prov. Salta, Argentina

Photo © Geoff Bailey



Fig. 450 *G. spegazzinii* Bailey, n. sp. in habitat. a. La Angostura, south of Molinos, Prov. Salta, Argentina

Photo © Geoff Bailey



Fig. 451 *G. spegazzinii* Bailey, n. sp. in habitat. a. La Cabaña, Prov. Salta, Argentina