



Fig.110 *G. baldianum*, Ferguson 406 from east of Andalgala. Prov. Catamarca, Argentina

sepals greenish-red, petals blood red to carmine-red, scales pink. Fruit relatively small, leucis. Style and stamens yellow.

Habitat: Uruguay, to the extreme north of Montevideo.

Said to have been collected by Müller-Melchers in Uruguay but this habitat was shown to be wrong by Pazout (1943).

The name '*G. Venturi*, Fric' first appeared in the Fric catalogue of 1929, named for Don Santiago Venturi from Turumán. Fric found it on his last trip to South America but, although he did not give a locality, we can deduce that it was probably from the border region of Catamarca and Turumán.

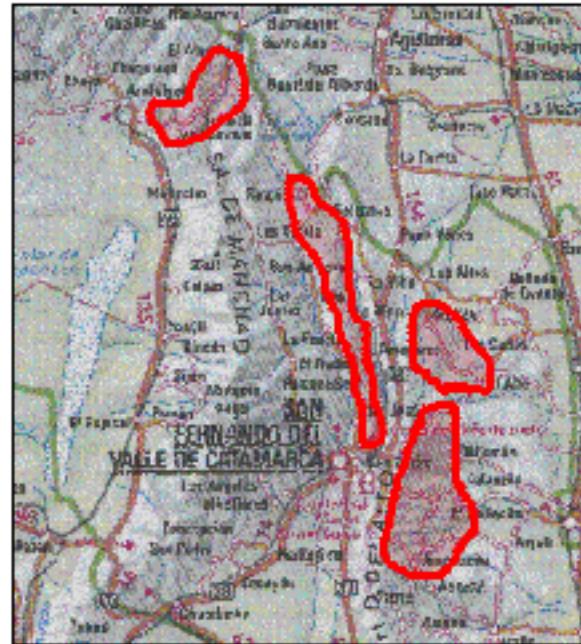
Backeberg (1959) himself agrees with Döhl (1938) that this is a synonym of *Echinocactus sanguiniflorus*, which was described by Werdermann two years before Backeberg validated Fric's description of *G. venturium*.

Distribution

This high altitude plant is often found among grass in the Province of Catamarca. It is known from the Sierra Ancasti, Sierra de Graciana, Sierra



Fig.111 *G. baldianum*, GC29.07 from El Pavezuela. Prov. Catamarca, Argentina



Base Map © Helios Verlag GmbH

Map 16
Distribution of
G. baldianum in
Prov. Catamarca,
Argentina

de Manchao and on the mountains east of Andalgala.

Bercht (pers. com.) has observed that the plants below about 800m in the south of the Sierra Ancasti have pinkish flowers, whilst those from the north at higher altitudes have red flowers with a shorter tube.

Conservation Status

Least Concern. The taxon is widespread and not subject to any immediate threats.

History

First described as an *Echinocactus* by Spegazzini in 1905, it was placed by him in *Gymnocalycium* twenty years later when he commented that Britton and Rose were wrong in making it a synonym of his *G. platense*.

In 1962, Fechner sent a consignment of plants to Frank that agreed with Spegazzini's description but without a locality. It included white-flowered examples.

Commentary

Although it has been redescribed twice since its first publication, it is now accepted that these names only represent minor forms of this variable plant. It is related to *G. amershauseri* and *G. webermannianum* which grow in similar environments.

During his trip in 1992, Bercht found a white flowered plant north of El Alto, Catamarca, which he named *G. baldianum* var. *albiflorum* Bercht (1994). Till & Neuhuber (1998) considered that this taxon does not belong to *G. baldianum*. Later, Neuhuber & Till (1999) formally made it a synonym of *G. roseae* which is here considered a form of *G. kinsbergii*.

Neuhuber & Till (1999) created the name *Gymnocalycium* x *hisdiae* for a hybrid between *G.*



Fig.112 *G. baldianum*, Neuhuber 740-2154 from the Sierra Ancasti. Prov. Catamarca, Argentina

baldianum and a white-flowered plant of the same seed group. They maintain that many plants previously considered to be *G. baldianum* that have larger bell-shaped flowers, a longer pericarp and a larger, fleshy body are in fact this hybrid.

Cultivation

This is one of the most popular *Gymnocalycium* species because of its lovely red flowers. The colour can be a deep red or sometimes more orange and it changes as the flower ages. In habitat it often grows amongst grass and in humus-rich soil, much like its southern relative *G. amershauseri*. This gives a clue to its preferences in cultivation where it enjoys a rich soil, protection from strong sun and steady supply of water in the growing season. Without regular watering it will go into a shrunken state from which it can take some time to recover. It is tolerant of cold conditions in winter.

Illustrations

Britton & Rose (1922) *The Cactaceae* Vol. III: Fig.178 on page 165 contributed by Spegazzini and mis-captioned as *G. platense*.

Werdermann (1932): Tafel 33 *Blühende Kakteen* (as *E. sanguiniflorus*)

Pazout, F. (1943) *Kaktuskunde* 11(2): p.40 (as *E. sanguiniflorus*)

Till, H. (1972) *Kus* 23(9): pp.238-240 pictures illustrating various forms.



Fig.113 *G. baldianum* STO10512 from Agua de Paloma. Andalgala. Prov. Catamarca, Argentina



Fig.114 *G. baldianum*, GC05.021 from near Shgull. Prov. Catamarca, Argentina



Fig.115 *G. baldianum*, GC05.021 from near Shgull. Prov. Catamarca, Argentina