

Short Communication

Patrinia villosa (Thunb.) Duf. (Valerianaceae) new to the European alien flora: report and taxonomic treatment

Gabriele Galasso*, Enrico Banfi

Abstract - *Patrinia villosa* (Valerianaceae) is reported for the first time as a casual alien species in Italy (Lombardy), marking its first known occurrence in Europe. *Patrinia villosa* and *P. scabiosifolia*, both native to Asia, have recently been introduced into the Italian horticultural market as flowering plants for gardens and containers. Furthermore, *P. scabiosifolia* has escaped in Germany, Austria, and Belgium. The hybrid of the two species (*Patrinia* × *hybrida*) is known, and even for this nothospecies possible escapes into the wild cannot be ruled out, as with parent species. The present report also provides an opportunity to propose a taxonomic reinterpretation of the *P. villosa* diversity, with the elevation and separation of *P. villosa* subsp. *punctifolia* at species rank.

Key words: Europe, Italy, new report, *Patrinia punctifolia*.

Riassunto - *Patrinia villosa* (Thunb.) Duf. (Valerianaceae) nuova per la flora alloctona d'Europa: segnalazione e trattazione tassonomica.

Patrinia villosa (Valerianaceae) viene segnalata per la prima volta allo stato di alloctona casuale in Italia (Lombardia), risultando nuova anche per l'Europa. *Patrinia villosa* e *P. scabiosifolia*, entrambe asiatiche, sono state immesse da poco tempo nel mercato orticolo italiano come soggetti da fiore per giardini e contenitori; inoltre *P. scabiosifolia* risulta spontaneizzata in Germania, Austria e Belgio. Si conosce l'ibrido delle due specie (*Patrinia* × *hybrida*) e anche per questa notospecie non si possono escludere eventuali fughe in natura alla pari delle specie parentali. La segnalazione in oggetto è poi occasione per una proposta di reinterpretazione tassonomica della diversità di *P. villosa*, con l'elevazione e la separazione di *P. villosa* subsp. *punctifolia* al rango di specie.

Parole chiave: Europa, Italia, nuova segnalazione, *Patrinia punctifolia*.

The genus *Patrinia* Juss. (Valerianaceae, or Caprifoliaceae subfam. Valerianoideae), sister to *Valeriana* L. s.l. (Wang *et al.*, 2025), comprises 14 accepted species (POWO, 2025+) distributed across temperate Asia from the Ural Mountains eastward. *Patrinia sibirica* (L.) Juss. is the westernmost species, reaching the southern Urals. Two species of *Patrinia* are traded internationally as ornamental plants for gardens and containers, valued for their showy flowers, yellow and white respectively: *P. scabiosifolia* Link and *P. villosa* (Thunb.) Duf. As a result, *P. scabiosifolia* has escaped in Germany (POWO, 2025+), Austria (Hohla *et al.*, 2025), and Belgium (https://waarnemingen.be/species/142698/observations/?date_after=2000-03-17&date_before=2026-03-17&search=&user=&location=&sex=&month=&life_stage=&activity=&method=&validation_status=).

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Fig. 1 - *Patrinia villosa*, Milano (Italy), Parco delle Cave; 19/10/2025 (Photo G. Galasso).

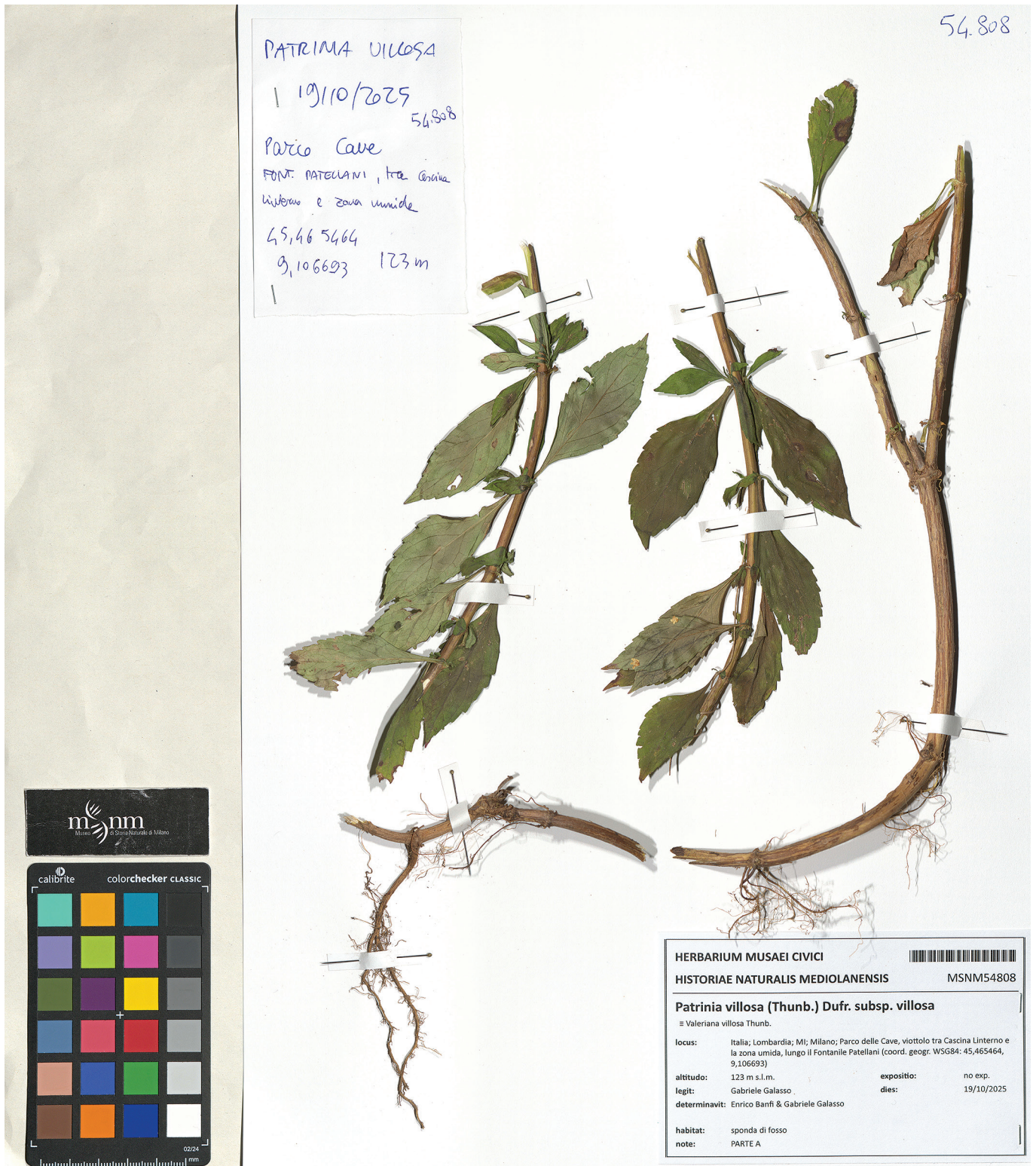


Fig. 2 - *Patrinia villosa* (MSNM54808).



Fig. 3 - *Patrinia villosa* (MSNM54811).

Interestingly, escaped plants in the Netherlands are correctly identified as *P. monandra* C.B. Clarke (https://waarneming.nl/species/428924/observations/?date_after=2000-03-17&date_before=2026-03-17&search=&user=&location=&sex=&month=&life_stage=&activity=&method=&validation_status=). In addition, *P. villosa* is here reported for the first time in Italy (Fig. 1) and in Europe as a casual alien. It should be noted that the natural hybrid with intermediate characters *P. scabiosifolia* × *P. villosa*, i.e. the nothospecies *Patrinia* × *hybrida* Makino (1908), is native to Japan, where it is also cultivated and sold alongside the parent species. Consequently, its presence cannot be ruled out in nurseries that source material from Japanese suppliers or cultivate both parental species. This raises a potential risk of escape beyond its native range, including for *P. ×hybrida*.

Specimina collecta

Italia; Lombardia; MI; Milano; Parco delle Cave, viottolo tra Cascina Linterno e la zona umida, lungo il Fontanile Patellani (coord. geogr. WGS84: 45.465464°N, 9.106693°E), sponda di fosso, 123 m, no exp., leg. G. Galasso, det. E. Banfi & G. Galasso, 18 Oct 2025 (MSNM barcode MSNM54807); *ibidem*, 19 Oct 2025 (MSNM barcodes MSNM54808 [Fig. 2], MSNM54809, MSNM54810, MSNM54811 [Fig. 3]).

Taxonomic treatment

Wang (1985), referring to *P. villosa*, described the subspecies *punctifolia*, which has been accepted by Hong *et al.* (2011) and POWO (2025+) as distinct from the type subspecies on the basis of the following characters: “*A typo differt rhizomate horizontali stoloniformi nullo, foliis supra punctulis rufis glanduliferis minutissimis praeditis, bracteis imis inflorescentiae lobis lateralibus 1-2 iugis ornatis, ovariis fertilibus hirtellis* [It differs from the type in the absence of a horizontal stoloniform rhizome, the leaves dotted with minute reddish glands adaxially, lower inflorescence bracts with lateral lobes divided into 1-2 pairs of segments, and the bristly ovary of fertile flowers]”. Both morphological characters, which are far from being minor, and the chorological individuality of the taxon (China, southeastern Liaoning: Benxi, Huanren, Kuandian) lead us to treat the taxon as a species distinct from *P. villosa*. This conclusion is also supported by the results of a systematic-molecular study conducted by Wong *et al.* (2024), which focused on the four *Patrinia* species used for medicinal purposes in China (*P. heterophylla* Bunge, *P. monandra*, *P. scabiosifolia*, and *P. villosa*). Here, then, is our proposal for the new rank-specific combination for which we propose the following new combination and status:

***Patrinia punctifolia* (H.J.Wang) Banfi & Galasso, comb. et stat. nov.**

Bas.: *Patrinia villosa* subsp. *punctifolia* H.J.Wang, *Acta Phytotax. Sin.* 23(5): 380. 1985.

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