

## TAXONOMIC STATUS OF *CLINOPODIUM MACROSTEMUM* (LAMIACEAE)

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### ABSTRACT

*Clinopodium macrostemum* (Benth.) Kuntze was long treated as a member of the large genus *Satureja*. Recent DNA studies (Cantino and Wagstaff 1998) suggest that it is best treated as a member of the genus *Clinopodium*. Appropriate transfers of the six or so Mexican species that relate to the latter have been made by various authors, all of these lacking infraspecific taxa. Two varieties have been recognized within *C. macrostemum*, one of these requiring a formal name change, which is provided herein. An accounting of their biological and geographical status is also provided. *Phytologia* 90(3): 411-413 (December, 2008).

**KEY WORDS:** Lamiaceae, *Satureja*, *Clinopodium*, Mexico

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***Clinopodium macrostemum* var. *laevigatum* (Standl.) B.L. Turner,  
comb. nov.**

Based on *Clinopodium laevigatum* Standl., Contr. U. S. Nat. Herb. 23: 1273. 1924.

*Satureja laevigata* (Standl.) Standl.

*Satureja macrostema* var. *laevigata* (Standl.) McVaugh & Schmid

*Clinopodium macrostemum* is a relatively widespread species of the more montane regions of western Mexico. The taxonomy of the complex was treated in considerable detail by McVaugh & Schmid (1967). The latter authors recognized two infraspecific taxa within its fabric, a relatively restricted var. *macrostemum* and a very widespread var. *laevigatum*, the latter delimited almost entirely by its glabrous primary stems and foliage. A map showing the distribution of the two

taxa was also provided, along with comments regarding their taxonomic status.

The authors stated that the var. *laevigatum* “can under no circumstances be considered an independent species, as we cannot distinguish it from *Satureja macrostema* in any way except by the amount of pubescence on vegetative parts.” They further noted that the typical var. *macrostemonum* was restricted to a small area of south-central Mexico, but that both varieties occasionally occur together or near each other. Lastly, they stated that “Because of the almost completely allopatric distribution of the glabrous and pubescent extremes, we suppose they have evolved separately, to the extent that they may be recognized as varieties of a single species.”

Their Fig. 3, showing the distribution of the two taxa, records their co-occurrence in at least three populations, two of these removed from the more restricted geographical region of var. *macrostemonum*. I have included herein a new map (Fig.1) of the distribution of the taxa concerned, this based upon their records and those at LL, TEX; noteworthy is the range extension of var. *macrostemonum* to the state of Oaxaca (*Breedlove & Almeda 60149; Hinton et al. 26009*). Indeed, the two taxa co-occur in the Municipio of Miahuatlán, Oaxaca, but label data suggest that the var. *macrostemonum* occurs at somewhat lower elevations (ca 2200 m vs. ca 2900 m). Nevertheless, I concur with the observations of McVaugh and Schmidt: the two taxa are weakly differentiated and show signs of intergradation in regions of contact, this possibly due to hybridizations. Alternatively, the glabrous individuals may be no more than local populational forms of a widespread, mostly glabrous *Clinopodium macrostemonum*. Additional field studies will be needed to resolve the problem.

#### LITERATURE CITED

- Cantino, P.D. and S.J. Wagstaff. 1998. A reexamination of North American *Satureja* s.l. (Lamiaceae) in light of molecular evidence. *Brittonia* 50: 63-70.  
McVaugh, R. and R. Schmid. 1967. Novelties in *Satureja* Sect. Gardoquia (Labiatae). *Brittonia* 19: 261-266.

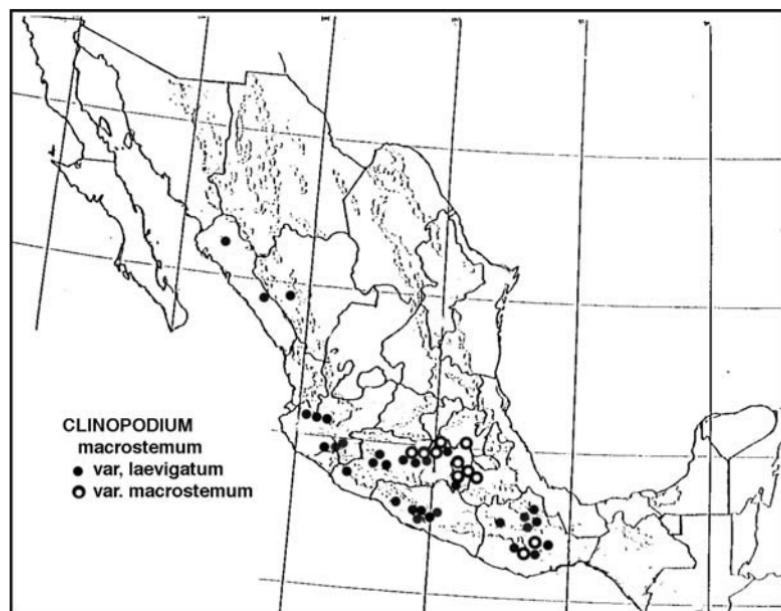


Fig. 1. Distribution of the *Clinopodium macrostemum* complex.