

## NOTA BREU

## On the presence of *Genista ramosissima* (Fabaceae) in NE Iberian Peninsula

### Sobre la presència de *Genista ramosissima* (Fabaceae) al nord-est de la península Ibèrica

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#### *Genista ramosissima* (Desf.) Poir.

Baix Cinca: Mequinensa, two spots on the eastern side of the Riba-roja reservoir, close to Segre bridge, UTM 31TBF7483, 90-100 m, scrubland with *Pistacia lentiscus*, *Retama sphaerocarpa* and *Atriplex halimus*, 1-IV-2025; Mequinensa, Los Castellets area, on the northern bank of the Riba-roja reservoir, UTM 31TBF7881, 75-80 m, mosaic of scrubland and nitrophilous vegetation, 1-IV-2025.

*Genista ramosissima* is endemic to the semi-arid regions of North Africa (Algeria, Morocco) and the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula (Talavera, 1999; POWO, 2025). In the Iberian Peninsula, it is known from eastern Andalusia, in the provinces of Almeria, Granada and Malaga (Talavera, 1999). Some reports further north, included in databases as GBIF, are erroneous or very doubtful. The habitat of this plant are shrublands of dry areas, on basic soils (in limestones, marls or gypsum) at altitudes from sea level to about 1300 m, in the Thermo-Mediterranean and Meso-Mediterranean vegetation belts (Blanca *et al.*, 2011). It is related to *Genista cinerea* DC. group (Pardo *et al.*, 2004), of which in the NE of the Iberian Peninsula only *G. ausetana* (O. Bolòs & Vigo) Talavera [*G. multicaulis* Lam.] was known until now. It is a relatively tall shrub (up to about 2 m), with a genistoid habit, stems of intense green colour, unifoliolate leaves, glabrous on upper side and sericeous below, flowers in groups of 1-3 surrounded by leaves, flowers with a villous and bilabiate calyx, and a yellow corolla with hairy petals, which persist dry in the immature fruit, a hairy linear-oblong legume 1.5-2 cm long.

We have recently found on the banks of the Riba-roja reservoir (Mequinensa municipality) some plants with characteristics that allow them to be identified as *G. ramosissima*. This area in the lower Ebro river valley, administratively within the autonomous community of Aragon, is very far

(about 500 km) from the nearest known localities of the species. Although there are affinities between the flora of the Ebro valley and that of SE Iberian Peninsula and North Africa, its discovery is surprising, because this area is botanically fairly well-known and *G. ramosissima* is a large and easily visible plant. After the discovery of the first individuals, the area was surveyed at the beginning of April, a time when this shrub was in full bloom and could be identified from long distances. The species was found growing very close to roads. However, it was not located in any of the nearby ravines and slopes, covered with natural vegetation and with very suitable potential habitats, in which only two other Genistae with yellow flowers were observed, *Genista scorpius* (L.) DC. and *Cytisus fontanesii* Spach.

Its location in a few spots along roads and its apparent absence in natural habitats suggests that it is a recently introduced species. We do not know the possible way of introduction, but the most plausible one is an accidental transport in public work trucks or in the cars of the many fishermen who visit this area. A voluntary planting is unlikely, because although this plant appears in some old catalogue of species that are suggested for planting in roadsides renaturalization (Ruiz de la Torre *et al.*, 1990), we have never seen it used and furthermore, in the places where it is known in Mequinensa, none of the plants often used in roadsides was observed.

In Mequinensa, *G. ramosissima* was found at three spots on the banks of the Riba-roja reservoir, separated by a maximum distance of 3.7 km. Two spots are very close, a few tens of meters apart, located just north of the bridge that crosses the Segre river before the confluence with the Ebro. Here only 5 and 3 individuals have been observed in the strip of vegetation between the reservoir water and Mequinensa to Granja d'Escarp road. The third spot, located further east and adjacent to the Ebro reservoir, is in a place between two dirty roads where waste material was dumped. A larger popula-



Figure 1. Two *Genista ramosissima* growing together with *Pistacia lentiscus* and *Olea europaea*.

tion of 20-30 individuals is known here. At the three spots, individuals of various sizes can be found, with evidence of recent reproduction, and this species seems in the process of naturalization.

## References

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Figure 2. Stems and flowers.

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