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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Nomenclatural notes on two names of elms published by P. Miller and R.A. Salisbury: *Ulmus sativa* and *U. procera* (*Ulmaceae*)

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Abstract. Typification of the elm species names *Ulmus procera* Salisb. and *U. sativa* Mill. is discussed. Both these names are lectotypified on illustrations (which seem to be the only extant original material for each name) published in Gerard's *The Herball, or, Generall historie of plantes*, i.e., respectively, "Ulmus vulgatissima folio lato scabro" and "Ulmus minor, folio angusto, scabro". The available molecular and morphological data indicate that the plants placed in *U. procera* are related to *U. minor* s. l., a Eurasian variable species that includes two currently recognized infraspecific taxa, i.e. subsp. *minor* and subsp. *canescens*. Supported by the present nomenclatural study, a coherent taxonomic choice is to consider *U. procera* as a subspecies of *U. minor* (not as a heterotypic synonym of *U. minor* subsp. *minor*, as recognized by various authors). Based on morphological observations, *U. minor* subsp. *procera* can be distinguished from the other two subspecies (subsp. *minor* and subsp. *canescens*) by the lower length/width ratio of the leaf blades (1.1–1.6 vs. 1.7–2.5 times longer than wide). Concerning Miller's *U. sativa*, its leaves features match those of *U. minor* subsp. *minor*, and the two names are here synonymized.

Keywords: morphology, synonymy, typification, *Ulmus minor*

Introduction

The genus *Ulmus* L. (*Ulmaceae* Mirb.) comprises 20–40 species, mainly occurring in the north temperate zones and extending southward into tropical mountains of both hemispheres (see Whittemore et al., 2021, and references therein). The genus was recovered as monophyletic by Zuo et al. (2017) who published the first complete chloroplast genome sequence in *Ulmaceae* (but see also Wiegrefe et al., 1994; Whittemore et al., 2021). Concerning the issue of delimitation of infrageneric taxa in *Ulmus*,

Whittemore (2017) provided a well-supported and elaborate classification, with four subgenera, eight sections, one subsection, and twelve series.

The taxonomy and delimitation of many species in *Ulmus* is much complicated by a long history of human cultivation, which has greatly altered the patterns of morphological variation in *Ulmus* (Whittemore et al., 2021). In Asia and Europe, many variants, often considered earlier as separate species, are now treated as stable cultivars, often of unknown origin (see, e.g., Browicz, Zielinski, 1982; Richens, 1983; Gil et al., 2004). In this context, a

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nomenclatural understanding is fundamental for assuring the application of various names in *Ulmus* which, in turn, facilitates unambiguous communication across different fields, including in areas such as silviculture, horticulture, and applied conservation (Thomson et al., 2018).

As part of the ongoing studies on the genus *Ulmus* (Iamónico, Capotorti, 2025), I investigate here in the nomenclatural context the names *Ulmus sativa* Mill. and *U. procera* Salisb., which need clarification since they appear to be not yet typified properly.

Materials and Methods

This research is based on the analysis of relevant literature (i.e., protologues of the names investigated and works cited therein, and primary floras and other publications in which the studied names are listed or mentioned), and on the search for and study of specimens preserved at BM, LINN, and UPS (acronyms according to Thiers, 2026–onward) and their images available online. Nomenclatural articles cited throughout the text follow the current version of the *International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants* (hereafter the ICN), the *Madrid Code* (Turland et al., 2025).

Results and Discussion

Typification and taxonomic identity of *Ulmus procera*

The name *Ulmus procera* was validly published by Salisbury (1796: 391) who reported only: “*U. [Ulmus] campestris* α . *Soland. in Ait. Hort. Kew. v. 1. p. 319*”. This citation refers to Aiton (1789: 319) and, specifically, to *U. campestris* L. var. (α) *vulgaris* Aiton. Aiton (1789: 319) named its var. *vulgaris* as “*Ulmus vulgatissima folio lato scabro*” by citing Gerard (1633: 1478) and Ray (1724: 468) and also reported “*Huds. angl. 109*” after this polynomial. This latter citation would refer to Hudson’s *Flora Anglica* where, however, Hudson (1762) treated elms at pages 94–95 [at page 109 of *Flora Anglica*, as reported by Aiton (1789: 319), there are taxa belonging to the family *Apiaceae* Lindl.]. “*Ulmus vulgatissima folio lato scabro*” (as in Aiton’s *Hortus Kewensis*) was listed by Hudson (1762: 94) as a synonym of *U. campestris*. Finally, “*Ulmus campestris. Mill. dict. Du Roi hort. herb. 495*” was listed as a further synonym by Aiton (1789: 319), and it refers to Miller (1768: *Ulmus* no. 1) and Du Roi (1772: 495). All things

considered, the typification of Salisbury’s *Ulmus procera* should be studied in the context of Aiton’s *Hortus Kewensis* (see Art. 7.4 of the ICN).

Gerard (1633: 170), cited by Aiton (1789), provided an illustration which is original material for the name *Ulmus procera*. This illustration, being the only currently traced original material (no specimen that can be considered for the lectotypification purpose was found), is here designated as the lectotype for *U. procera*.

Gerard’s illustration of “*Ulmus vulgatissima folio lato scabro*” displays leaves clearly asymmetric, but the base of the longer side does not form a lobe overlapping the petiole; the blades are ovate (“two inches [about 5.1 cm] broad and three inches [about 7.6 cm] long” in Gerard’s description) and dentate, with the apex more or less acuminate; there are 10–13 secondary veins (5–7 on each side of the midrib); based on Gerard’s description, the upper surface of the leaves is rough. Most of the characteristics of the leaves match the current concept of both *U. minor* s. l. and *U. procera*, but the surface would refer to *U. procera* only, according to the authors who accepted this latter entity as a separate taxon (see, e.g., Tutin, 1993: 76; Uotila, 2011; Thomas et al., 2018); also, the length/width ratio of the leaf blade agrees with the recognition by Eversham (2021: 18) who specified that it is 1.1–1.6 for *U. procera* and 1.7–2.5 for *U. minor*. On the other hand, several authors consider *U. procera* as a heterotypic synonym of *U. minor* subsp. *minor* (see, e.g., Portal to the Flora of Italy, 2025–onward; POWO, 2026–onward), while some named it as *U. minor* var. *vulgaris* (Richens, 1983), or just *U. minor* with no further infraspecific recognition (Amaral Franco, 1992; Gil et al., 2004; Caudullo, de Rigo, 2016; Whittemore et al., 2021).

The question about the taxonomic recognition of *Ulmus procera* is not completely solved at present. The phylogenetic work by Whittemore et al. (2021) demonstrated that some taxa [i.e., *U. minor* s. str., *U. minor* subsp. *angustifolia* (Weston) C.A. Stace, *U. minor* subsp. *canescens* Bartolucci & Galasso, *U. minor* subsp. *sarniensis* (C.K. Schneid.) C.A. Stace, *U. procera*, and *U. stricta* (Aiton) Lindl. var. *goodyeri* Melville] form a well-supported clade (bootstrap value: 100) comprising subclades with different (low to high) support (bootstrap values from 28 to 100). *Ulmus minor* subsp. *angustifolia* and subsp. *sarniensis* form a highly supported subclade (bootstrap value: 100) and could be considered as separate taxa. On the other hand, *U. minor* subsp. *canescens* Bartolucci

& Galasso (*U. canescens* Melville, *nom. inval.*; *U. minor* subsp. *canescens* Browicz & Ziel., *nom. inval.*) is currently accepted as a separate taxon (see, e.g., Portal to the Flora of Italy, 2025–onward; POWO, 2026–onward), although it forms, together with *U. procera*, a low-supported group (bootstrap value: 54) in the tree proposed by Whittmore et al. (2021). *Ulmus procera* is accepted as a separate species in the *Flora of North America North of Mexico* (Sherman-Broyles et al., 2005). My opinion is that the relationships among the taxa belonging to the *Ulmus minor* aggregate (see Uotila, 2011) need further investigation. Note that Jeffers (1996), based on multivariate analyses on characteristics of the leaves, emphasized that *U. minor* and *U. procera* can be morphologically distinguished by the size of their leaves (which are smaller in *U. minor*). Based on just the lectotype of *U. procera* (Gerard's illustration), which represents the original morphological concept of the taxon, *U. procera* can be also distinguished from *U. minor* s. str. by the surface of leaves (rough vs. smooth; Fig. 1A–B). Tutin (1993: 76) distinguished these two species by the shape of their leaf blades, i.e. “suborbicular to ovate” in *U. procera* and “obovate to oblanceolate” in *U. minor* s. str. (Fig. 1C–D). Eversham (2021: 18), as stated above, specified the length/width ratio of the leaves, identifying *U. procera* with blades 1.1–1.6 times longer than wide and *U. minor* with blades 1.7–2.5 times longer than wide.

All things stated, and waiting for further studies, I prefer to maintain for *Ulmus procera* the status of an accepted taxon. Anyway, considering the case of the current recognition of *U. minor* subsp. *canescens*, I prefer to accept the subspecies rank for Salisbury's elm, according to the proposal by Amral Franco (1992: 259; see below).

Typification and taxonomic identity of *Ulmus sativa*

Ulmus sativa was validly published by Miller (1768: *Ulmus* no. 3) with a short diagnosis (“ULMUS (*Sativus*) foliis ovatis acuminatis duplicato-serratis, calycibus foliaceis”); the synonym “*Ulmus minor*, folio angusto, scabro” (from Gerard, 1633: 1478) was also cited. Miller (1768) also stated that this species “is not native of England” and “is commonly known in the nursery-gardens by the title of English Elm”. Gerard (1597: 1480) published an illustration which is original material for the name *U. sativa*. No original specimen useful for the lectotypification purpose was traced at BM, LINN, and UPS, where Miller's

herbarium and types are known to be preserved (HUH, 2013). Consequently, Gerard's illustration represents the only known extant original element, and it is here designated as the lectotype of Miller's name.

The taxonomic identity of the lectotype is not so easy to establish. In fact, Gerard's illustration is not so detailed and, especially, it lacks fruit images which features are important for identifying correctly the species of *Ulmus* (see, e.g., Tutin, 1993; Sherman-Broyles et al., 1997; Fu et al., 2003). Note that neither Gerard (1633: 1478) nor Miller (1768: *Ulmus* no. 3) gave information about fruits in their descriptions by stating, respectively, “I have not observed either the flowers or seeds ...” and “... I could never observe any seed upon this sort”. Note that Miller's taxon is considered often as a synonym for *U. minor* subsp. *minor* (see, e.g., POWO, 2026–onward, and references therein). Based on just the morphology of the leaves, they are obovate to oblanceolate and smooth in *U. minor* (see Tutin, 1993: 76). Gerard's “*Ulmus minor*, folio angusto, scabro” has leaves ovate, “usually about two inches and a half long, and an inch or an inch and a quarter broad” (which corresponds to a length/width ratio of 2.0–2.5:1), more or less asymmetric, with the base of the longer side not forming a lobe overlapping the petiole, and the apex acute; leaf surface is rough, according to the description by Gerard (1633: 1478). The length/width ratio highly overlaps that referring to *U. minor* (ratio 1.7–2.5) while it is out of the range for *U. procera* (ratio 1.1–1.6:1) (see Eversham, 2021: 18). On the other hand, leaf surface would be rough (Gerard, 1633: 1478), a character which would be diagnostic for *U. procera* (here recognized as a subspecies, see below). However, it is to be noted that, in elms, species where mature leaves on lateral branches are normally smooth, have often scabrous leaves on leaders, on shoots regenerating after the tree has been cut back or otherwise damaged, or when they are juvenile. The fact that Gerard (1633) described his “*Ulmus minor*, folio angusto, scabro” as a plant growing in a hedge suggests that it may have been cut back. Consequently, I here consider *U. sativa* as synonym of *U. minor* s. str., according to the prevailing opinions in the current literature.

Taxonomic treatment

Ulmus minor Mill., Gard. Dict., ed. 8.: no. 6. 1768 (Miller, 1768: unpaginated, *Ulmus* no. 6) subsp. *minor*.



Fig. 1. Leaves in *Ulmus minor* subsp. *procera* and *U. minor* subsp. *minor* (s. str.). A, B: adaxial surface [A: *U. minor* subsp. *procera* (from specimen at RO collected in Rome along the Tevere (Tiber) River); B: *U. minor* subsp. *minor* (from specimen at RO collected at the Circeo National Park, southern Lazio, central Italy)]; C, D: shape [C: *U. minor* subsp. *procera* (from specimen at RO collected in Rome along the Tevere (Tiber) River); D: *U. minor* subsp. *minor* (from Portal to the Flora of Italy, 2025 under the CC-BY-SA 4.0 license)]

TYPE (neotype, designated by Iamónico & Caportorti, 2025: 1215): Great Britain, England, Leicestershire, Owston to Launde road, Apr 1933, “Ex Herb. F. A. Sowter” (SLBI!; image of the neotype available at <https://herbariaunited.org/sheets/SLBI/41923.jpg>).

= *Ulmus sativa* Mill., Gard. Dict., ed. 8.: *Ulmus* no. 3. 1768 (Miller, 1768: unpaginated, *Ulmus* no. 3).

TYPE (**lectotype, here designated**): [illustration] “*Ulmus minor*, folio angusto, scabro” in Gerard (1633: 1478; image of the lectotype available at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/33580#page/1444/mode/1up>).

Ulmus minor Mill. subsp. *canescens* Bartolucci & Galasso, Ital. Botanist 7: 138. 2019.

TYPE (holotype): Greece, Thrace, Karakeuy, 17 May 1932, *H.G. Tedd 806* (K000852646!, image of the holotype available at <https://d2jcv3kl45hlgj.cloudfront.net/0483c141a7e7ffd7fcd7aedb3cadadb4.jpg>).

Ulmus minor Mill. subsp. *procera* (Salisb.) Franco, Anales Jard. Bot. Madrid 50: 259. 1992 = *Ulmus procera* Salisb., Prodr. Stirp. Chap. Allerton: 391. 1796 = *Ulmus campestris* L. subsp. *procera* (Salisb.) Maire, Bull. Soc. Hist. Nat. Afrique N. 30: 364. 1939.

TYPE (**lectotype, here designated**): [illustration] “*Ulmus vulgatissima* folio lato scabro” in Gerard (1633: 1740; image of the lectotype available at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/33580#page/1444/mode/1up>).

Diagnostic key of the subspecies included in *Ulmus minor*

1. Ratio length/width of the blade 1.1–1.6:1 (Fig. 1C) subsp. *procera*
– Ratio length/width of the blade 1.7–2.5:1 (Fig. 1D) 2
2. Leaves and branchlets glabrous to slightly pubescent; secondary veins 7–12 subsp. *minor*
– Leaves and branchlets densely pubescent; secondary veins 12–16 subsp. *canescens*

Notes on the distribution and habitat of *Ulmus minor* subsp. *procera*: *Ulmus minor* subsp. *procera* is a species native to Europe (England, Wales, Scotland, Spain, and the Balkans) and North Africa (Algeria and Tunisia), according to Uotila (2011, sub *U. procera*), whereas it is considered alien in Ireland and Northern Ireland and

doubtfully native in Libya. Concerning Italy, no record occurs in the *Euro+MedPlant Base* (Uotila, 2011). According to Brullo and Spampinato (1999), *U. minor* subsp. *procera* (reported as *U. procera*) is a diagnostic species of the alliance *Alno-Quercion roboris* Horvat 1950 (order *Populetales albae* Br.-Bl. ex Tchou 1948; class *Salici Purpureae-Populetea Nigrae* Rivas-Martínez et al. 2001) which represents hygrophilous and acidophilous forest communities that grow on plains and hills. Based on the relevés by Brullo and Spampinato (1999: 144, Table 1), *U. minor* subsp. *procera* (which was listed in relevés nos. 3 and 5) occurs in Italy in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region (north-east) and Molise region (the southeastern part of the Italian Peninsula). My examination of specimens preserved at RO revealed plants identifiable as *U. minor* subsp. *procera* and collected in Trentino-Alto Adige in Province of Bolzano (northern Italy), as well as in Lazio regions (central Italy), in both Province of Viterbo (around Lake Bracciano) and Metropolitan City of Rome, along the bank of the Tevere (Tiber) River.

Specimina visa (selected specimens examined): Italy, Trentino-Alto Adige region, Province of Bolzano, pie' e dintorni, ca. 900 m a.s.l., VIII.1959, Anzalone s.n. (RO!); Viterbo, presso il lago di Bracciano, IX 1973, Anzalone s.n. (RO!); Lazio, Roma, Rive del Tevere entro città, Lungotevere della Vittoria, X 1975, Anzalone s.n. (RO!); *ibidem* (RO!); *ibidem* (RO!); Lazio, Roma, Rive del Tevere in città, presso Ponte Milvio riva sin., X 1976, Anzalone s.n. (RO!); Lazio, Roma, Rive del Tevere, Lungotevere Ripa, IX 1978, Anzalone s.n. (RO!).

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ETHICS DECLARATION

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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**Номенклатурні нотатки щодо двох назв в'язів, опублікованих
Ф. Міллером і Р. Солсбері: *Ulmus sativa* та *U. procera* (*Ulmaceae*)**

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Реферат. Обговорюється типіфікація видових назв *Ulmus procera* Salisb. та *U. sativa* Mill. Обидві назви лектотипіфіковані ілюстраціями, опублікованими у роботі Джерарда “*The Herball, or, Generall historie of plantes*” (“Травник, або Загальна історія рослин”) які, очевидно, є єдиними наявними оригінальними елементами обох назв, а саме, відповідно, “*Ulmus vulgatissima folio lato scabro*” та “*Ulmus minor, folio angusto, scabro*”. Наявні молекулярні та морфологічні дані вказують на те, що рослини, ідентифіковані як *U. procera*, є близько спорідненими з *U. minor* s. l., євразійським варіабельним видом, який наразі включає два визнані внутрішньовидові таксони – subsp. *minor* і subsp. *canescens*. Як вказує наша номенклатурна розвідка, доцільно розглядати *U. procera* як підвид *U. minor* (а не як гетеротипний синонім *U. minor* subsp. *minor*, як визнають різні автори). За морфологічними ознаками *U. minor* subsp. *procera* відрізняється від двох інших підвидів — subsp. *minor* і subsp. *canescens* — меншим співвідношенням довжини до ширини листових пластинок (які є довшими за ширину в 1,1–1,6, а не в 1,7–2,5 рази). Що стосується *U. sativa* у розумінні Міллера, характерні ознаки листків цього виду збігаються з ознаками *U. minor* subsp. *minor*, і ці дві назви тут синонімізовані.

Ключові слова: морфологія, синонімія, типіфікація, *Ulmus minor*