

Chinese primrose rediscovered

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Primula mallophylla Credit: Dr. WU Zhi-Kun, Kunming Institute of Botany

A botanist at one of Kew's Millennium Seed Bank partners, the Kunming Institute of Botany, has rediscovered two populations of a primrose which was thought to be extinct in the wild.

During a recent botanical expedition to the Dabashan mountains in northern Chongqing, Dr WU Zhi-Kun from the Chinese [Millennium Seed Bank](#) partner, the Kunming Institute of Botany, [Chinese Academy of Sciences](#), re-discovered two populations of a primrose with attractive purple flowers which was thought to be extinct in the wild.

Dr WU identified the plant as *Primula mallophylla* Balf. f.. It is a narrow endemic perennial species, occurring only in the Dabashan mountains in Chongqing where it grows in wet meadows and shaded, wet areas in forests above 2,100 m above sea level. The species had been first described scientifically in 1916 and since then not seen. In the Chinese Species Red List, this species had been assessed as extinct in the wild (EX). After the re-discovery, it was reassessed as Endangered (EN).

Seeds of the species were collected and sent to the Germplasm Bank of Wild [Species](#) at the Kunming Institute of Botany, where they are now safely stored for long term conservation. Individuals of this plant are also grown in Lijiang Alpine Botanical Garden and in the Botanic Garden of Kunming Institute of Botany.

Because of its attractive flowers, *Primula mallophylla* has great potential as a garden plant.

Provided by Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

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