

Researchers find new species of *Artemisia* in Xinjiang

August 24 2023, by Li Yuan



Morphological characteristics of *Artemisia qingheensis*. Credit: Jin Guangzhao

Artemisia has attracted much attention due to its antimalarial properties and other pharmacological and economic value.

Researchers led by Dr. Jin Guangzhao from the Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and their [collaborators](#) have discovered a [new species](#) of Artemisia—*Artemisia qingheensis* in China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The work was published in *PhytoKeys* on August 2.

The new species was discovered from Qinghe County during a field expedition in the northeast region of the Junggar Basin in 2020. Researchers revisited this site at different times in 2021 and 2022 to carry out further observations and sampling to determine the taxonomic identity of the new population.

They found that the new species has multi-layered involucre bracts and homogamous capitula with bisexual flowers. Therefore, it belongs to subgenus *Seriphidium*, which was further proved by phylogenetic analyses. Its hardened needle-like leaves at maturity distinguish it from morphologically similar species.

The subgenus *Seriphidium*, one of the most diverse taxa in *Artemisia*, comprises of around 130 species and 30 infraspecific taxa worldwide. This subgenus grows mainly in arid and semi-arid regions of Central Asia and Northwest China. 31 species and six varieties have been recorded in China.

Based on additional morphological and molecular [phylogenetic analyses](#), the researchers concluded that it is different from all other known species of *Artemisia*, and named it *Artemisia qingheensis*. The discovery of this new species not only enriches the [species](#) diversity of subgenus *Seriphidium*, but also has significance for the study of speciation, evolution and biogeography of *Artemisia*.

More information: Guang-Zhao Jin et al, *Artemisia qingheensis* (Asteraceae, Anthemideae), a new species from Xinjiang, China,

PhytoKeys (2023). [DOI: 10.3897/phytokeys.229.101689](https://doi.org/10.3897/phytokeys.229.101689)

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