

# THE CORRECT NAME FOR THE GLABROUS LEAVED PLANTS OF *ASTER ALBESCENS* (DE CANDOLLE) HANDEL-MAZZETTI (ASTERACEAE)

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**Abstract.** The correct name for plants of *Aster albescens* (Asteraceae) with glabrous leaves is discussed and a new combination, *A. albescens* var. *glabratus*, is proposed. *Aster albescens*, a highly variable species in China, extends from the western Himalaya to central China.

**Keywords:** *Aster albescens* var. *glabratus*, Asteraceae, China, Himalaya

*Aster albescens* (de Candolle) Handel-Mazzetti (Asteraceae), is a variable complex of intergrading populations of shrubs that extend from the western Himalaya to central and south central China. Ten varietal names have been assigned to segregates of this complex in China, based primarily on pubescence, gland characters and size of the leaves, and pubescence and shape of the involucre. Typical *Aster albescens* has elliptic to ovate-lanceolate leaves 5–12 × 1.0–12.5 cm, with grayish white appressed tomentum on the abaxial surface, and puberulent outer phyllaries. In sharp contrast are plants named *Aster albescens* var. *levissimus* Handel-Mazzetti, which differ by having glabrous, eglandular leaves, or, at most, young leaves sparsely tomentose on the abaxial midvein, and glabrous phyllaries. While *levissimus* is an apt name, it is not the earliest available epithet at the rank of variety for the plants with glabrous leaves and phyllaries. That

distinction belongs to *Aster harrowianus* Diels var. *glabratus* Diels, which predates *Aster albescens* var. *levissimus* by 26 years and is placed in the synonymy of var. *levissimus* in *Flora Reipublicae Popularis Sinicae* (Ling, 1985), therefore necessitating a new combination.

***Aster albescens*** (De Candolle) Handel-Mazzetti var. ***glabratus*** (Diels) Boufford & Y. S. Chen, *comb. nov.*

Basionym: *Aster harrowianus* Diels var. *glabratus* Diels, Notes Roy Bot. Gard. Edinburgh 5: 184. 1912.

Synonym: *Aster albescens* var. *levissimus* Handel-Mazzetti, Acta Horti Gothob. 12: 208. 1938.

The nearly total lack of trichomes on the leaves of *Aster albescens* var. *glabratus* makes it one of the most distinctive morphological manifestations of the species.

## LITERATURE CITED

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