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## Typification of *Myosotis hortensia* Decne., the basionym of *Myosotidium hortensium* (Decne.) Baill., and its synonym *Cynoglossum nobile* Hook.f. (Boraginaceae)

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**Abstract** Holotype material of *Myosotis hortensia* Decne., the basionym of *Myosotidium hortensium* (Decne.) Baill. is located at P and the collection of this by J. B. Cecille in 1838 from the Chatham Islands, New Zealand, is described. For *Cynoglossum nobile* Hook.f., an illustration of a cultivated plant accompanying the description of the genus *Myosotidium* is designated as the neotype, as syntype material has not been located. *Cynoglossum nobile* is the basionym of *Myosotidium nobile* (Hook.f.) Hook.; this latter name is the type species of the genus *Myosotidium* Hook. and is treated as a synonym of *Myosotidium hortensium*. To be in agreement with the neuter gender of *Myosotidium*, the specific epithet is corrected to *hortensium*.

**Keywords** Boraginaceae; *Myosotidium*; *Myosotidium hortensium*; *Cynoglossum nobile*; typification; Chatham Islands

### INTRODUCTION

*Myosotidium hortensium* (Decne.) Baill. (see below for specific epithet termination), the Chatham Island forget-me-not, is endemic to the Chatham Islands, where it occurs on Chatham, Pitt, South East, and Mangere Islands, as well as many of the smaller

islands and islets of the archipelago. It grows in coastal habitats on cliffs, rock outcrops, and sandy and rocky beaches just above the strand zone. In this paper we review the history surrounding the first collections and naming of the Chatham Island forget-me-not, giving particular regard to the typification of *Myosotis hortensia* Decne., the basionym of *Myosotidium hortensium*, and the synonym *Cynoglossum nobile* Hook.f. As noted by Allan (1961), the type had not then been located.

### *Myosotis hortensia* Decne.

When *Myosotis hortensia* was described by Decaisne (in Delessert 1846), he cited a collection made from the Chatham Islands by Captain Cecille (Appendix 1): “Crescit in insula Chatam legit Cl. navarchus Cecile” [sic]. Jean Baptiste Cecille (1787–1873) was captain of the corvette *Heroine* that was sent to New Zealand waters by the French government to provide support and assistance to French whaling ships in 1837 and 1838 (McNab 1913). In New Zealand the *Heroine* undertook various voyages, one of these being a trip to the Chatham Islands. The *Heroine* set sail from the Bay of Islands on 6 October 1838 and arrived at the Chatham Islands on 17 October 1838 (McNab 1913), where it anchored at Waitangi (Richards 1982, p. 56). The length of their stay is not known but is likely to have been relatively short, as although McNab (1913) does not provide a precise date when Cecille and the *Heroine* left the Chatham Islands, he infers they left on about 20 October 1838 after giving parting gifts to the local people. It is not known what motivated Cecille to collect the specimen of Chatham Island forget-me-not. It is possible he may have been instructed by the French government to collect plant specimens for scientific research while in New Zealand, although he is not recognised as having been a prolific collector of herbarium specimens. However, Cecille is known to have collected wood samples while in New Zealand, as Allan Cunningham assisted him in the Bay of Islands for three days while they collected wood from New Zealand trees for the French government (Heward 1842).



Fig. 1 *Myosotis hortensia*. A, The holotype specimen at P. B, Illustration provided by Delessert (1846).

From the above account of *Myosotis hortensia* it is evident that a wild specimen collected by Cecille from the Chatham Islands in 1838 was the basis of the description. A single specimen of *M. hortensia* has been located in the Decaisne Herbarium at the Paris Herbarium (P) (Fig. 1A), and this plant specimen and label are consistent with the protologue. The specimen is of an inflorescence in flower and this matches the description (Appendix 1). Furthermore, this specimen is clearly dated as 1838, but the month is less certain and possibly reads October; if so, this would be consistent with the time when Cecille was in the Chatham Islands. The morphology of this herbarium specimen is similar to the illustration provided by Delessert (1846) (Fig. 1B) in that both represent the inflorescence with several upper cauline leaves; it is most likely that the illustration is drawn from the same plant sample that is represented by the herbarium specimen. No other specimens, wild or cultivated, were located in the Decaisne Herbarium, and this single specimen is therefore designated as the holotype. E. C. Nelson (25 July 1989) annotated the Decaisne specimen as being the “typus”, but to our knowledge has not published on the subject.

Decaisne does not indicate why the specific epithet *hortensia* was applied to the Chatham Island forget-me-not. This name may refer to the obvious horticultural merit of the species with its large blue flowers and bold leaves. Indeed, support for the horticultural merit of *M. hortensia* is presented in an article by Decaisne (1848) on new plants being introduced to France. In this, Decaisne referred to *M. hortensia* and its attractive large corymb of blue flowers: “Les îles Chatam produisent une espèce de *Myosotis vivace* (le *M. Hortensia*), don’t les corolles, qui mesurent 0<sup>m</sup>,02 de diamètre, constituent par leur réunion un large corymbe d’un bleu celeste”. Alternatively, the epithet *hortensia* could be taken to refer to the species having been in cultivation, a suggestion made by Allan (1961, p. 807; ‘Type: ? Originally described from garden plants.’). Decaisne, who was at the time a botanist at the Jardin des Plantes in Paris, may have grown the species after Cecille returned to France.

#### *Cynoglossum nobile* Hook.f.

*Cynoglossum nobile* was named and described in a brief way by J. D. Hooker in *The Gardeners’ Chronicle*

on 27 March 1858 with no explicit mention of any specimens (Appendix 2). In the notes accompanying the description, J. D. Hooker commented: "This is the plant exhibited by Mr. Watson, of St. Alban's, at the last meeting of the Horticultural Society." This meeting of the Horticultural Society of London was held on 2 March 1858 and the minutes of this are published in *The Gardeners' Chronicle* (p. 175) of 6 March 1858. In regard to the new *Cynoglossum* exhibited by Mr Watson, the following was reported in the minutes:

"From Mr. Watson, Florist, St. Alban's, came another novelty in the shape of a supposed new *Cynoglossum* from the Chatham islands, lying a little to the eastward of New Zealand. From among a mass of ample deeply furrowed dark green foliage shot up a number of flower-spikes on the end of each of which would evidently soon be a compact head of most beautiful Forget-me-Not-like pale blue flowers, each edged with white. Only one of these heads was expanded, but it served to show what a fine thing it is. The contrast made by such delicate colours gave life and variety to the truss, which in bouquets must have a charming appearance. But in addition to its beauty the plant has value of another kind; it is all but hardy, and therefore every person who has a greenhouse can grow it. It must, therefore, be regarded as an acquisition, more especially when we consider how scarce blue flowers are among early flowering half-hardy plants. [sic]"

The following year (1859) in *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*, W. J. Hooker described the new genus *Myosotidium* Hook. and in doing so transferred his son's epithet *nobile* from *Cynoglossum* making the new combination *Myosotidium nobile* (Hook. f.) Hook. W. J. Hooker noted that the plants on which he based his description of *Myosotidium* were provided by Mr Standish in April 1859 (given as 1829 in error), who is said to have "the whole stock of this choice plant" (Hooker 1859). John Standish (1814–75) was a nurseryman who had been in partnership with C. Noble at Bagshot between 1847 and 1856 (Desmond 1977). Therefore, based on these accounts, we can be certain that the specimens used by J. D. Hooker to describe *Cynoglossum nobile* and by W. J. Hooker to name *Myosotidium* were from garden plants provided by Mr Watson and Mr Standish, respectively. Therefore, a search was made of the herbaria at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew (K), and the Natural History Museum (BM), for specimens that could be candidates to be type specimens. No specimens referable to or associated with W. J. Hooker, J. D. Hooker, Mr Standish, or



Fig. 2 Illustration accompanying the description of *Myosotidium* by W. J. Hooker. This is selected as the neotype for *Cynoglossum nobile*.

Mr Watson were located. In the absence of any original material of *Cynoglossum nobile* at K and BM that could be holotype material or designated as a lectotype, it is necessary to select a neotype. Since the plant material used to describe *C. nobile* and to illustrate the genus *Myosotidium* were from garden plants being cultivated in London in 1858 and 1859, respectively, it is appropriate to designate as the neotype (see McNeill et al. 2006, Article 9.6) for *Cynoglossum nobile* the illustration accompanying the description of *Myosotidium* provided by Hooker (1859) (Fig. 2). Accordingly, this action is taken here.

## TYPIFICATION

*Myosotidium* Hook., *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*, 85, t. 5137 (1859)

TYPE SPECIES: *Myosotidium nobile* (Hook.f.) Hook., *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*, 85, t. 5137 (1859)

≡ *Cynoglossum nobile* Hook.f., *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, 240 (1858)

TYPE SPECIMEN: Specimen provided by Mr Watson.

NEOTYPE (selected here; Fig. 2): Illustration provided by Hooker (1859).

*Myosotidium hortensium* (Decne.) Baill., *Histoire des Plantes*, 10, 383 (1891)

≡ *Myosotis hortensia* Decne., in Delessert JPB, *Icones selectae plantarum* 5, 42, t. 99 (1846)

TYPE SPECIMENS: "Crescit in insula Chatam legit Cl. navarchus Cecile."

HOLOTYPE (selected here; Fig. 1A): P00622862, *Myosotis hortensia* Dne., Borrachinee, fl. bleues, Ile Chatam, dans les sables maritimes, O<sup>bre</sup> 1838.

NOTES: Literally translated as "fl. blues, island Chatam, in the sands maritime".

SPECIES EPITHET: *Myosotidium* is a neuter genus. Therefore, the specific epithet *Myosotis hortensia* (singular) is altered to *Myosotidium hortensium* (neuter, singular) in accordance with the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature Article 32. 7 (McNeill et al. 2006; see also International Plant Name Index, www.ipni.org).

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## Appendix 1 Original description of *Myosotis hortensia* by Decaisne.

"MYOSOTIS HORTENSIA. DNE. *Spec. nov.*

M. foliis obovatis carnosulis supra glabris nervis impressis subtus subincanis, floribus cymosis pedunculis pedicellisque hirsutis incanis. Corolla caerulea semipollicaris. DNE.

CRESCIT in insula Chatam legit Cl. navarchus Cecile."

**Appendix 2** Original description of *Cynoglossum nobile* Hook.f. in *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, p. 240, 27 March 1858.

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“220. CYNOGLOSSUM NOBILE, J. D. Hooker

C. elatum robustum, foliis glabriusculis petiolatis cordato-ovatis subacutis nervis parallelis caulinis sessilibus oblongis obtusis; (exemplar mancum)

HAB. Chatham Islands, east of New Zealand (S. Lat. 44°).

A most remarkable plant, especially on account of its great size and robust habit. Leaves are large as those of a small Cabbage, very thick in texture, with a broad petiole, and a broadly cordate blade, deeply marked with 5–7 strong parallel nerves, whence they resemble those of a *Funkia*, or of one of the larger Gentians.

The upper cauline leaves are oblong and sessile. The flowers are comparatively small, of a pale purple changing to blue. Calyx lobes oblong, blunt, strigose, with white appressed hairs. Corolla with a short tube, and 5 short broad retuse segments. Scales at the throat of the corolla short, not very prominent, retuse. Anthers almost sessile. Style very short. J. D. H.

This is the plant exhibited by Mr. Watson, of St. Alban's, at the last meeting of the Horticultural Society. Its provisional name, *cyaneum*, is now cancelled.”

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