



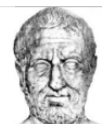
HELLENIC REPUBLIC

**National and Kapodistrian
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Department of Biology, Section of Botany
Laboratory of General Botany

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PRESS RELEASE

The rediscovery after 61 years of *Consolida samia*, a rare plant of the Greek flora

On May 27, 2023, a research team of the Department of Biology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), located a sizeable population of the plant *Consolida samia*, at the southwestern slopes of Mt Kerkis, in the western part of Samos Island, probably at the same place (locus classicus) where the plant was discovered for the first time (26.5.1962) by the Swedish botanist Sven Snogerup. The NKUA discovery field team was comprised by the biologists Apostolis Kaltsis and Sofoklis Mouratidis and the researcher of the flora of Samos George Fakas.

The discovery was realized in the framework of a research project of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA Seed Bank, Section of Botany, Department of Biology) entitled “Quest to rediscover *Consolida samia* - exploring the screees of Mt Kerketefs (Samos, Greece)” and funded by the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund (scientific responsible: Prof. Emer. Costas Thanos). At the same time, the quest for this species is part of the project “Monitoring and evaluation of the conservation status of European and National interest flora species” of the Ministry of the Environment and Energy (Greece) under the scientific responsibility of Prof. Emer. Kyriacos Georghiou and the responsibility for *Consolida samia* of Prof. Emer. Costas Thanos.

Consolida samia P.H. Davis is a small, annual plant (therophyte), a local endemic of Samos, which grows in a single population at a relatively restricted, stony area on Kerkis Mt. The species is protected by the Presidential Decree 67/81 and has been assessed (2011) as Critically Endangered (CR) by the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature); it is also included in the “Top 50 Mediterranean Island Plants” (2005, 2017) and is one of the 26 Greek plants of Community Priority of the “Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive) for the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora”. Since the very first day of its discovery until today, the plant has been considered ‘missing’, despite several expeditions

attempted for its rediscovery, throughout this long period, among them our project's first field mission in May 2022, carried out by biologists Spyros Oikonomidis and Ilias Dimitriadis as well as George Fakas. It is worth noting that until now we have known this plant species only from five desiccated specimens which were collected by Snogerup and hosted thereafter at the Botanical Herbaria of Lund and Edinburgh. Therefore, the photographs accompanying this press release are the first ever to be published depicting the plant alive in its natural habitat.

In the framework of our team research activities, we aim to present detailed data at a scientific conference in the next months while we are currently preparing an article to be submitted for publication in an international scientific journal.

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Photographs (all shot in 27.5.2023): 1. A cluster of *Consolida samia* individuals (© G. Fakas & NKUA Seed Bank), 2. Two flowering plants of *Consolida samia* in their stony habitat (© A. Kaltsis & NKUA Seed Bank), 3. Close-up of a *Consolida samia* flower (© S. Mouratidis & NKUA Seed Bank).



2



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3



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