

ISU-Botanical trip to Kyrgyzstan.

17th of June - 28th of June 2017



picture 1



picture 2



picture 3



picture 4

Kyrgyzstan, Switzerland of the Orient, is located on the West Side of China, South of Kazakhstan, North of Tajikistan and East of Uzbekistan. It has the surface of one third of Germany but is home to only 6 million inhabitants. In the past, it often was occupied by different nations like Mongolia, Russia and China. Never ISU-enthusiasts went so far for stilling their botanical hunger. Brian Kabbes met his wife Meerim Kozhoshova here in her beautiful homeland. Both guided this trip already for the fifteenth time. Meerim is the organiser, speaks Dutch, English and Kirgiz. Brian is the speaking dictionary of the Kirgiz flora. Most of Kyrgyz people are Muslim, what we even in the middle of the night could hear when the imam asked for the pray.... One third of the population lives in the capital Bishkek. This busy metropolis has a much higher standard than the countryside where we found the standard of living like two or even three generations ago in Europe. Here in Bishkek, we underwent the typical Asiatic busy atmosphere flavored with a sauce of past sovietunion relicts. The neighbour China is entering slowly in the life and structure of this poor country by building perfect highways that are as good or of even better quality then our European ones. The Kyrgyz people are very friendly and have a high amount of humor that shows their intelligence. They served us healthy, well spiced, not too hot food with little meat (sheep - no lamb) and plentiful use of vegetables. We always had a save feeling all over the country except at the bazaar were the police tolerate the pickpockets, only at the entrance, for a rich percentage of their "income".

After an accidental and retarded nightly flight to Bishkek over either Istanbul or Moscow, 15 ISU members of Belgium, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland met each other in the first two basic but good guesthouses in Bishkek. After a short rest and brunch we made at Sunday afternoon 18 June a walking city tour. The 4 hour time difference made it a short day.

Monday 19 June - Chong Kemin National Park

Botanizing in the fields. We went to Nora's Guesthouse. After installing for 2 nights she, the animist chief of the good kept guesthouse, hunted the bad ghosts away by burning dry branches of *Juniperus semiglobosa*. At this first botanizing day we saw immediately the interesting flora that was very differing from the more known alpine flora in Europe. During the whole trip we will be accompanied by herbs like *Artemisia dracunculus*, *A. absinthium*, *Cannabis ruderalis*.....



picture 5



picture 6



picture 7

Pictures: 1. Yurts were the houses of the nomadic Kyrgyz people, 2. Traditional and Modern capital Bishkek, 3. Soviet-Union megalomania, 4. The Flag of Kyrgyzstan dates from 1992, 5. Nora and our guides Meerim and Brian, 6. Beautiful savanna landscape, 7. Meerim at a yurt

The most important plants were:

Aconitum leucostomum
Adonis aestivalis
Artemisia santolinifolia
Centaurea ruthenica
Codonopsis clematidea
Dianthus kaschakewiczii
Dictamnus angustifolia
Echium vulgare ("the plant of the region")

Eremurus fuscus
Galium turkestanicum
Geranium collinum
Geum aleppicum
Lathyrus parviflora
Leonurus turkestanicus
Ligularia heterophylla
Linaria transiliensis
Linum olgae

Nonea caspica
Onobrychis arenaria
Pedicularis alatauca
Phlomis pratensis
Rosa amblyantha
Salvia deserta
Scutellaria przewalskii
Thymus marschallianus
Ziziphora clinopodioides

Thursday 20 June - Chong Kemin National Park

Botanizing in the Annie Djok Valley. Here it was cloudy and not as hot as in Bishkek (27°C / 36°C), because of the altitude (+-1500m). Driving on the bad regional and national roads needs good drivers. Our two drivers did a good job, although it was still Ramadan. The perfect highway to Bishkek is recently built by big brother China. A bird (roodmus in Dutch) is singing: "Pleased to meet you"



picture 8



picture 9



picture 10



picture 11

Achillea asiatica
Achnatherum splendens
Allium amplexans
Artemisia austriaca
Artemisia persica
Aster canescens
Dactylorhiza umbrosa

Dodartia atropurpurea
 (parasite)
Geranium pseudosibirum
Lamarckia aurea
Lathyrus tuberosus
Linum heterocephala
Nepeta nuda

Papaver dubium
Papaver pavoninum
Prunella vulgaris ssp. *Asiatica*
Rhinanthus songaricus (half-parasite)
Thalictrum minus

Wednesday 21 June - Chong Kemin National Park

Botanizing in the gorge of the Chong Say. Transport in 2 good vans to Bokonbaev situated South of the Ysyk-Kul lake at 1800 m height. Here we enjoyed the landscape decorated by the high mountains covered by eternal snow. Here we saw the nice solitary plants of *Achnatherum splendens*. Eating and sleeping in a yurt made us aware of the luxury life we have in Europe. No chairs and hard mattresses were an attack on our lazy backs. That night the dogs of the camping protected their territory against an attack of wolves - some of us who didn't enjoy a deep sleep heard the crying wolves and barking dogs.

Pictures: 8 *Eremurus fuscus*, 9 *Papaver pavoninum*, 10 *Dactylorhiza umbrosa*, 11 *Onobrychis arenaria*

Achillea filipendulina
Achillea wilhelmsii
Alcea nudiflora
Allium trachycordum
Arnebia guttata
Artemisia chinensis
Cichorium intybus
Clematis glauca

Clematis songarica
Conium maculatum var.
immaculatum
Eremurus tianschanicus
Glaucium fimbrilligerum
Glycyrrhiza glabra
Inula grandis
Linaria transiliensis

Nepeta cataria
Patrinia intermedia
Peganum harmala
Thermopsis turkestanica
Verbascum songaricum
Verbascum thapsus
Ziziphora pedicellata

Thursday 22 June - Bokonbaev - Skazka – Bokonbaev

Walk through Skazka valley. We walked through a small valley. At the end we came to a very miraculous landscape with bizarre sandstone formations and Kazakh tourists. The name Skazka means fairy tale in Kyrgyz and it was really a fairy tale landscape.

On the way back we took a bath in the Issyk Kul Lake, the second large lake situated on the second highest place after the Titicaca lake in Peruan and Bolivian altiplano. A jump into the rather cold lake refreshed us. Knowing that in winter there is a temperature of -35-40°C the lake never freezes heated by hot water sources.

Driving back to our guesthouse we saw the deserted 2 km long touristic settlement financed by a - now bankrupt - Turkish capitalist.



picture 12



picture 13



picture 14

Allium korolkowii
Allium oreoscordum
Anabasis tianschanica
Chenopodium botrys
Cuscutta monogyna (parasite)
Echinops nanus

Ephedra glauca
Iris halophila
Lacochilus platyacanthus...
Limonium kaschgaricum
Marrubium supinum
Nonea caspica

Perovskia scrophularifolia
Plantago arenaria
Brassica campestris
Rosularia platyphilla
Sedum albertii

Friday 23 June - Bokonbaev - Temir Kanat – Bokonbaev

Botanizing in the majestic landscape of mountains and steppes of Temir Kanat. Many of the herbaceous perennials have garden potential.



picture 15



picture 16



picture 17

Pictures: 12 *Limonium kaschgaricum*, 13 Kyrgyzstan is at least not ready for megaloman touristic investments, 14 *Perovskia scrophularifolia*, 15 *Leontopodium ochroleucum*, 16. Kyrgyzstan made us relaxed, 17 *Lindelia stylosa*

Acantholinum albertii
Aconitum rotundifolium
Androsace dasyphylla
Aquilegia atrovinosa
Arenaria gramine
Artemisia persica
Aster serpentimontanus
Bupleurum succulum
Cerastium fontanum
Clematis songarica
Convolvulus tragacanthoides
Dactylorhiza umbrosa
Dracocephalum bipinnatum
Dracocephalum nodulosum

Erigeron allochrous
Geranium saxatile
Hedisarum songaricum
Hyoscyamus niger
Ixiolirion tataricum
Leontopodium ochroleucum
Lindelofia stylosa
Ligularia macrophylla
Ligularia narynensis
Ligularia alpigena
Limonium suffruticosum
Linum heterosepalum
Nigritella minor
Oxitropis stricta

Paraligusticum discolor
Pedicularis physocalix
Phlomis oreophila
Pimpinella minor
Polygala amara
Polygonum viviparum
Primula longiscapa
Pyrethrum karelinii
Rheum spiciforme
Scabiosa ochroleuca
Sedum ewersii
Sesleria glauca
Thymus seravschanicus
Trollius dschungaricus

Saturday 24 June - Bokonbaev - Ak Say – Bokonbaev

Ak-Say valley is situated in the central part of the country at 260 km from Bishkek. Thanks to the use of an old Russian truck, we were the first group that reached this wonderful valley. After a walk between high loess walls with a very spare vegetation, we reached the Issyk Kul. The beach was a wonderful picnic place.



picture 18



picture 19



picture 20

Sunday 25 June - Bokonbaev - Burana – Bishkek

Visit the archeological site of Burana and a short botanic survey around. The Burana Tower is a large minaret in the Chuy Valley. It is located about 80 km from Bishkek, near the town of Tokmok. The tower is all that remains of the ancient city of Balasagun, which was established by the Karakhanids at the end of the 9th century along the Silk Road. In the evening, we had a very nice meal in a Uzbek restaurant. That reduced the sadness we felt about the destroyed group of more than one hundred *Delphinium semibarbatum* that Brian found the year before and that was burned down on a bad chosen moment.

Sideritis montana
Colchicum kesselringii
Convolvulus canescens
Cousinia umbrosa

Delphinium semibarbatum
Tragopogon marginata
Eryngium macrocalyx
Limonium wulfenii

Salvia sclarea var. *turkestanica*
Verbascum blattaria
Goniolimon cuspidatum



picture 21



picture 22



picture 23



picture 24

Pictures: 18 The always ice-free lake Ysyk-Kul, 19 Russian basic but reliable transport, 20 *Goniolimon cuspidatum* 21 *Delphinium semibarbatum*, 22 The Burana tower, 23 *Allium caeruleum*, 24 *Xeranthemum annuum*

Monday 26 June - Bishkek - Ala Archa – Bishkek

Brian and Meerim kept the nicest trip till the last botanizing day, which was the protected amazing Ala Archa Park. Here the with eradication threatened snow leopard is still alive. Because of the end of the Ramadan Kyrgyz people used the day off for visiting this beautiful park. At night again, tired, we went back to our guesthouse and tried another cuisine. The cook of the Uyghur restaurant prepared on high flames a magic meal.



picture 25



picture 26



picture 27

Aconitum karakolicum

Aconitum leucostomum

Acroptilon repens

Alchemilla sibirica

Allium caeruleum

Allium caeruleum var. proliferum

Allium platyspathum

Androsace sericea

Anthemis cotula

Bromus sylvestris

Campanula glomerata var. asiatica

Carthamus oxyacanthus

Cortusa turkestanica

Dactylorhiza salina

Echinops nanus

Epilobium septemtrionale

Epilobium latifolium

Geranium rectum

Herniaria glabra

Lamium turkestanicum

Ligularia thyrsoides

Melica ciliate

Origanum vulgare

var. minutissimum

Papaver tianschanica

Polemonium caucasicum

Polygonum coriarium

Polygonum polystachyum

Potentilla fruticosa

Potentilla tergemina

Rheum wittrockii

Rhodiola semenovii

Rubus chamaemorus

Silene asterias

Silene viridis

Solidago asiatica

Valeriana montana

Veronica beccabunga

Tuesday 27 June – Bishkek

We visited interesting felt shops, the famous Osh bazaar (5 km x 5 km!) and souvenir shopping. The real Chinese food that we tasted at the “Last Supper” again was of a high level and very appreciated by the group. The members of this very close and friendly group said goodbye at each other.

Brian enjoyed this amazing days and said that the ISU people formed the slowest but the most interested group he ever had.....



picture 28



picture 29



picture 30

Wednesday 28 June - Departure from Bishkek. Transport to Manas airport.

Pictures: 25 *Trollius dschungaricus* + *Alchemilla sibirica*, 26 The Ala Archa Park, 27 *Gentiana karelinii*, 28 To many to try, 29 To nice to eat, 30 To exuberantly to wear