

Crassula 'Andegavensis' Boom

This plant has been quite common in the Netherlands for a long time, both among enthusiasts and in commercial nurseries, but usually without a name. It took a long time before I could identify this plant and it was not clear to me whether we were dealing with a species growing in the wild or with a possible hybrid that had arisen in cultivation. The doubt was dispelled when in 1955 I found a specimen in the Kew Herbarium among the *Crassulas* that had not yet been determined, which exactly corresponded to what we have in cultivation. With this specimen was a letter and it appeared that this plant was sent to Kew Gardens for identification by Mr. Gumbleton shortly before 1900; the latter reports in that letter that he had received the plant in question under the name *Rochea andegavensis* from a florist in Angers (France) and that it had originated from the crossing of *C. falcata* with another species of *Crassula*. The label in the Kew Herbarium states: "*Crassula* hybrid, *C. falcata* X spec., Kew Gardens 30.1.1900, cultivated as *Rochea andegavensis*". This specimen is therefore the type of the *Crassula andegavensis* Boom described and illustrated here.

Now that it is certain that this *Crassula* originated by hybridization, we must try to determine which parents contributed to it. That one of these is *C. falcata* Wendl. seems likely; it would contradict that there is nothing left of the crooked leaf position, in this connection we could also think of *C. perfoliata* L., which actually only differs from *C. falcata* by the narrower, straight leaves; the flowers of both species are almost the same, at most the sepals of *C. perfoliata* can be called somewhat shorter than those of *C. falcata*. However, given the fact that the hybrid has fairly broad leaves, broader than those of *C. perfoliata* and in connection with the circumstance that the other parent is a species with much narrower leaves (see below) we must come to the conclusion that *C. falcata* and not *C. perfoliata* is one of the parents. In order to determine which the other parent could have been, we must investigate the differences between our hybrid and *Crassula falcata*. Habitually they are quite similar, especially in the inflorescence, but *C. andegavensis* differs by the white, backward-directed hairs on the stem, by the straight leaves, of which the papillae are not connected, by the smaller flowers and by the petals, which are somewhat folded at the top. The most important difference, however, is in the growth habit; while the stem of *Crassula falcata* continues to grow and the older leaves remain for a long time, the rosettes of *C. andegavensis* die off every year after flowering and new rosettes are formed at the base of the stems. We even find these new rosettes in the inflorescence, but it is not advisable to propagate them, because then you only get plants that flower immediately and then die off. The second parent must therefore be sought in a *Crassula* group, the species of which are characterized by the rosettes that die after flowering; two groups come into consideration for this, namely the group *Setulosa* and the group *Turrita*, which groups differ among other things in the inflorescence: those of the former group are corymb-shaped, those of the latter thyrsoid, i.e. plume-shaped. We must therefore search within the group *Setulosa*. Of all the species of this group that were in cultivation around 1900, only *C. schmidtii* Reg. and *C. cooperi* Reg. can be mentioned and in my opinion only *C. schmidtii* comes into consideration. The argument for this can be found in the corolla leaves folded in a gutter-shaped manner at the top. In *C. falcata* the petals on the dorsal side show a weak keel, but they are still clearly convex, in *C. schmidtii* the tip of the petals is clearly keeled and folded, which is not the case in *C. cooperi*. In my opinion, *C. andegavensis* originated from a cross between *C. falcata* x *C. schmidtii*.

Description of *Crassula andegavensis* :

Stem erect, up to 40 cm high, densely covered with backward-facing hairs.

Leaves crosswise, protruding or obliquely upwards, lanceolate, slightly connate at the base, pointed at the apex, along the edge densely and whitely ciliated, both sides covered with non-contiguous papillae. inflorescence densely corymb-shaped, on a stalk up to 20 cm long and with bracts that resemble the normal leaves, but are smaller; sepals almost free, long-ovate, pointed, roughly hairy, ciliated, ± 2.5 mm long; petals connate at the base, purple, narrow and slightly folded at the apex, 5-6 mm long; glands very small, flat; stamens slightly larger than the petals, with yellow anthers; ovary slightly shorter than the stamens, narrowing in the style.