

## **Villadia virgata**

With the help of **James Low**, **Ray Stephenson** has managed to identify a plant in his collection.

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Description of a plant in cultivation:

- **Form:** Lax perennial shrub.
- **Stems:** Base relatively thick, decumbent then upright, silvery brown.
- **Leaves:** Lanceolate to  $16 \times 5 \times 3$  mm, in several spirals, somewhat papillate, each with a small spur.
- **Bracts:** Large, leaf-like.
- **Sepals:** Large, to  $3/4$  length of petals, unequal, leaf-like.
- **Petals:** Upright, keeled, abruptly gibbous at the base,  $10 \times 4$  mm, convolute, connate for 2mm, slightly out-turned at the tips; green in the middle outer section with some red streaking on the keels.
- **Nectaries:** Fan shaped, bright orangeyellow, 1 mm.
- **Carpels:** Short, 4 mm, lime green, short beaks (additional 1 mm).
- **Stamens:** Short, 5 mm, 2 whorls of equal length, lime green filaments, yellow anthers.
- **Discussion:** Such a taxon must have been a 'toss-of-the-coin' decision whether to place it in Sedum or Villadia. As one can see from the photographs, the inflorescence is far from the typical Villadia spike. The connation of the petals is a crucial pointer.

The new-to-cultivation South American taxa are proving not too easy. I find they dislike greenhouse conditions in summer and much prefer a semi-shaded spot outdoors. In winter they do need frost protection and a little irrigation but as they tend to be high altitude species, they are susceptible to baking in full sun.



a)



b)



by Ray Stephenson

*Villadia virgata.*

a) depicts buds and typical leaves. b) shows the oddly disarranged inflorescence. c) portrays colour of flowers as they first open before they become bleached.