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RARE SPECIES OF THE GENUS *DIANTHUS* L. (CARYOPHYLLACEAE JUSS.) IN THE FLORA OF REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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The paper presents the results of the study on the distribution of rare species of spontaneous vascular plants of the genus *Dianthus* L. (family Caryophyllaceae Juss.). The rarest ones are proposed for protection in the Republic of Moldova and inclusion in the 4th edition of the Red Book of the Republic of Moldova. These are 8 species, with different degrees of endangerment – 6 critically endangered species (*D. borbasii* Vandas, *D. capitatus* Balb. ex DC., *D. carthusianorum* L., *D. deltoides* L., *D. pallens* M.Bieb. and *D. polymorphus* M.Bieb.), one vulnerable species (*D. guttatus* M.Bieb.) and one species of least concern (*D. leptopetalus* Willd.). The following data are indicated for these taxa: Latin, Romanian and Russian names, synonymy, category and criteria of rarity, biological and ecological characteristics, useful properties, general and local distribution, habitat, status and protection recommendations in the republic.

Keywords: *Republic of Moldova, Dianthus, Caryophyllaceae, rare species, vascular plants, spontaneous flora, red book.*

SPECII RARE DIN GENUL *DIANTHUS* L. (CARYOPHYLLACEAE JUSS.) ÎN FLORA REPUBLICII MOLDOVA

În lucrare sunt prezentate rezultatele studiului asupra răspândirii speciilor rare de plante vasculare spontane din genul *Dianthus* L. (familia Caryophyllaceae Juss.). Cele mai rare sunt propuse pentru ocrotire în Republica Moldova și includerea în a 4-a ediție a Cărții Roșii a Republicii Moldova**.** Acestea sunt 8 specii, cu grad de periclitare diferit – 6 specii critic periclitate (*D. borbasii* Vandas, *D. capitatus* Balb. ex DC., *D. carthusianorum* L., *D. deltoides* L., *D. pallens* M.Bieb. and *D. polymorphus* M.Bieb.), o specie vulnerabilă (*D. guttatus* M.Bieb.) și o specie neamenințată (*D. leptopetalus* Willd.). Pentru acești taxoni sunt indicate următoarele date: denumirea în limbile latină, română și rusă, sinonimia, categoria și criteriile de raritate, caracteristicile biologice și ecologice, calități utile, răspândirea generală și locală, habitatul, starea și recomandări pentru protecție în republică.

Cuvinte-cheie: *Republica Moldova, Dianthus, Caryophyllaceae, specii rare, plante vasculare, flora spontană, Cartea roșie.*

Introduction

One of the features of the flora of Republic of Moldova is the presence in it of a high number of rare and endangered species. Rare species of vascular plants now account for over 30% of the total composition of the flora of different categories of rarity. In accordance with the rarity categories, all these species are threatened with extinction due to the small number of populations and limited distribution across the territory [4, 5].

During the implementation of the Rare Species Projects (2010-2026), rare species in the Republic of Moldova were identified and assessed according to the IUCN rarity criteria [6], with the establishing a rarity category. In subsequent years, during the implementation of the projects “Research and *ex situ*, *in situ* conservation of the plant diversity of the Republic of Moldova” (2024-2027) and “Assesment of the state of plant, fungi and animal species, development of the list of species with rarity status and the algorithm for presentation in the 4th edition of the Red Book of the Republic of Moldova” (2024-2026), expeditionary research elucidated their distribution across the region and made possible to identify new habitats.

Complete data on the distribution of rare species allow us to correctly determine the rarity category of threatened with extinction species in the republic when compiling the lists of rare species subject to state protection and including into the Ecological Legislation of the Republic of Moldova and the IVth edition of the Red Book of the Republic of Moldova.

In this work, materials are presented on the distribution of rare species of the genus *Dianthus* L. in the Republic of Moldova based on the herbarium materials of the Herbarium of the Moldova State University and taking into account the findings of the last years. The genus *Dianthus* in the vascular flora of the region is represented by 15 species, of which 8 are rare: *D. borbasii* Vandas, *D. capitatus* Balb. ex DC., *D. carthusianorum* L., *D. deltoides* L., *D. guttatus* M.Bieb., *D. leptopetalus* Willd., *D. pallidiflorus* Ser. and *D. polymorphus* M.Bieb. [7].

Material and Methods

During our investigation concerning clarification of the category of rarity and distribution in the Republic of Moldova of rare species of the genus *Dianthus* L. (Caryophyllaceae family) in order of their inclusion in the 4th edition of the Red Book of the Republic of Moldova, we performed all necessary research. Firstly, we reviewed all information: literature data [1-5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 15-18] on the presence of species in the territory (including the adjacent territories – Romania and Ukraine) and consulted specimen materials in different scientific herbaria (Herbarium of the National Botanical Garden (Institute) of Republic of Moldova, Herbarium of the Moldova State University).

The taxonomy of *Dianthus* L. species followed by the recent taxonomical literature [10, 19]. The rarity of species is assessed according to the categories and criteria of IUCN [6].

Rare species are identified on the basis of their local distribution in the Republic of Moldova. The following symbols are used to denote the spread:

○ – localities, where the species has grown in the past (before 1975 i.e. over 50 years ago), ● – localities, where the species grows in the present time (from 1975 untill present time), ✦ – localities, where the species has grown in the past (before 1975 i.e. over 50 years ago) and confirmed during 2025 surveys, and ♦ – are localities first recorded in 2025. The general distribution is given according to literature data [10, 12, 16]. Data on useful properties of plants are indicated by literature data [13, 14]. The drawings were made by Leca Petru.

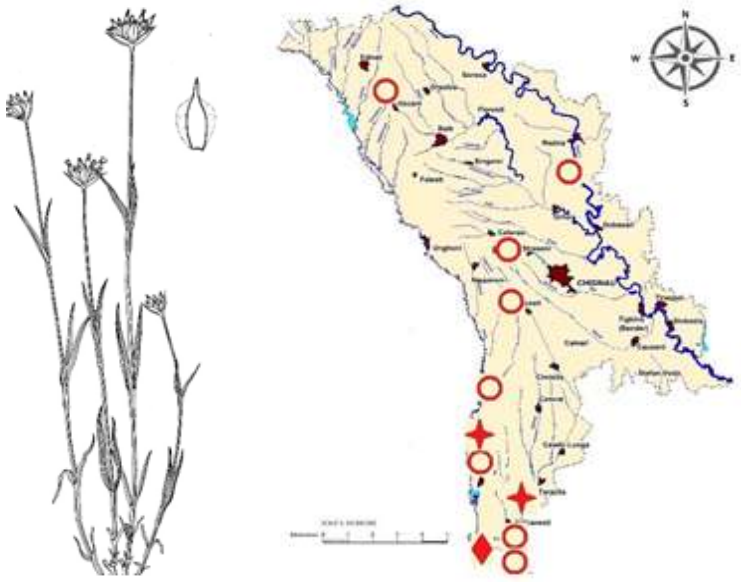
Results and discussions

In the vascular flora of the Republic of Moldova, the genus *Dianthus* L. is represented by 15 species. Of these, four are protected at the national level: three species are included in the 3rd edition of the Red Book of the Republic of Moldova CRRM (2015) [3] and three species are protected by law [8]. According to the IUCN criteria, seven species are assessed as rare of various threat categories, and one species is possibly extinct in the natural biotopes of the Republic of Moldova.

Within the framework of scientific study of the Laboratory of spontaneous Flora and Herbarium of the National Botanical Garden (Institute) of the Republic of Moldova, it was established that the genus *Dianthus* L. in the flora of the Republic of Moldova includes 8 rare species. According to the IUCN criteria of these critically endangered (category CR) – 5 species (*D. borbasii* Vandas, *D. capitatus* Balb. ex DC., *D. carthusianorum* L., *D. deltoides* L. and *D. polymorphus* M.Bieb.), vulnerable (category VU) – one (*D. guttatus* M.Bieb.), least concern species (category LC) – 1 (*D. leptopetalus* Willd.). They differ in the number and vitality of populations, local distribution and, along with the types of relatively low risk of extinction, are extremely rare.

In the article rare taxa of the genus *Dianthus* L. are given in alphabetical order, each with the indication of the following characteristics: Latin, Romanian and Russian names, synonymy, category and criteria of rarity, biological and ecological characteristics (including the plant habitus with the drawn illustration), general and local distribution (with maps of presence in the Republic of Moldova), habitat, status and protection recommendations in the republic.

Dianthus borbasii Vandas **– Garofiţă Borbaş – Гвоздика Борбаша**



a b

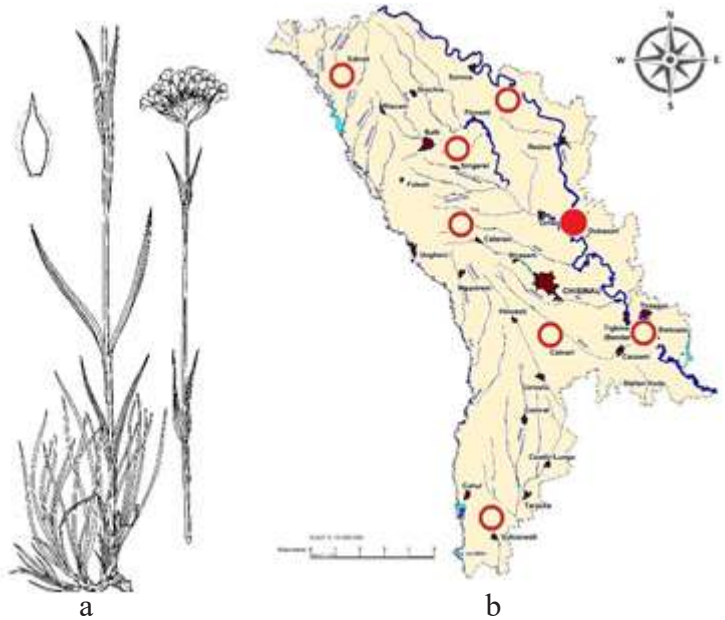
Figure 1. *Dianthus borbasii* Vandas: a – habitus and bract; b –occurrence in the Republic of Moldova

Critically Endangered (CR). A4cde; B2ab(i,ii,iii,iv). Perennial, hemicryptophytic plant (Fig. 1a), blooms in (May) June-August. It is a steppic, xerophilic plant, multiplies by seeds and vegetatively. Honey plant, ornamental, insignificant fodder plant. In the Republic of Moldova it has been met in the past sporadically throughout the territory: commune Pelinia (Drochia district); comm. Cinişeuţi (Rezina distr.); comm. Vorniceni (Străşeni); Bîcoveţ (Ungheni); town Hînceşti; town Iargara (Leova); comm. Baurci-Moldoveni, comm. Andruşul de Sus, comm. Văleni (Cahul); comm. Vinogradovca (Taraclia); or. Vulcăneşti, UTAG. During the survey of the steppe habitats of the southern part of the country, the growth in the vicinity of comm. Baurci-Moldoveni (Cahul district) was confirmed (in this locality it was first recorded on 13.05.1977 by A.I. Istrati and on 11.05.1977 by D.I. Gociu, both in blooming stage) and comm. Vinogradovca (Taraclia distr.) on 8.05.1941 by V.N. Andreev in bloom, on 11.06.1949 by Pozharisskaya L., Barskaya, on 12.05.1975 by A.I. Istrati and V.N. Kononov, on 22.05.1975 and on 11.05.1977 by D.I. Gociu, Chernykh, K.R. Vitko; all specimens in blooming stage). We have discovered a new locality for the species – the vicinity of the commune Văleni (Cahul district) (Fig. 1b). In the republic species is located at the southern limit of its natural area of occurrence area. Outside the borders of the republic grows in Central (doubtfully present in Poland) and Eastern (Baltic States, Belarus, Central, Eastern and Southern parts of the European Russia, Crimea, Ukraine) Europe, North Caucasus, Western Siberia and Central Asia (Kazakhstan).

Plants grow solitarily or in small groups in dry and subarid forest glades, on hills with steppe vegetation with *Stipa* and *Festuca* species; prefers chernozem, occasionally on loess slopes, in dispersed and poor populations. On the territory of the steppe sector in the south of Bugeac “Ciumai” the number of plants in the population is about 300 specimens. It grows in groups, sometimes forming clumps of about 1-2 m in diameter. The current total area is over 1-1.5 ha. In the vicinity of the Baurci-Moldoveni commune, populations of the species are associated with steppe clearings of *Quercus pubescens* Willd. forests on western and northwestern slopes. It grows in scattered small groups of 2-5 specimens, occupying an area of approximately 0.5 hectares. Abundance: 1-2 (3). The local population of Văleni is constrained in the lower part of the loess steppe slopes towards the Prut River, as part of the sparse herbage of xerophytic semi-desert steppes. It forms scattered groups with an abundance of 1 (2-3). The number of plants in the population is about 400. The current total area is about 1 ha. Inclusion in the list of species protected by law and into the 4th edition of the Red Book of the Republic of Moldova, monitoring the condition of known populations, highlighting new places; the introduction in the steppe plant collection of the Botanical Garden, for the species is recommended.

Dianthus capitatus Balb. ex DC. **– Garofiţă capitată – Гвоздика головчатая**

Critically Endangered (CR). A4cde; B2ab(i,ii,iii,iv). Perennial hemicryptophytic plant (Fig. 2a). It blooms in May-June, fruits in June-August. It is meadow, xeromesophilic plant, multiplies by seeds and vegetatively. Ornamental, medicinal, honey and insignificant fodder plant. In the Republic of Moldova it has been sporadically registered throughout the territory: comm. Feteşti, (Edineţ), comm. Vertiujeni (Floreşti), vill. Vrăneşti (Sîngerei) vill. Brăneşti (Orhei), comm. Bahmut (Călăraşi), vill. Zloţi (Cimişlia), comm. Copanca (Căuşeni), comm. Găvănoasă (Cahul) (Fig. 2b). It grows at the northern limit of its range.

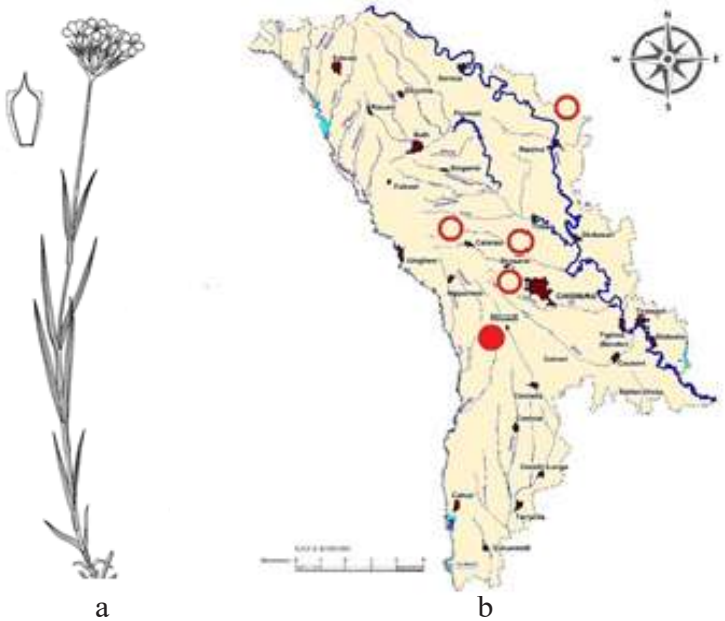


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Figure 2. *D. capitatus* Balb. ex DC.: a – habitus and bract; b –occurrence in the Republic of Moldova

Outside the borders of the republic grows in Central and Eastern (southern part) Europe, Crimea (southern part), Mediterranean region, Caucasus, Asia Minor. Plants are met in clearings of arid oak forests, rarely in oak forests with linden and ash, in steppes, on steppe limestone and clayey hills; prefers chernozem. It usually grows in small dispersed groups or solitarily with an abundance of 1. In the current growing sites, mainly generative specimens have been recorded. No protection action is taken. The territorial protection is carried out within the geological and paleontological natural monument „Feteşti Gorge", Bălţi steppe sector near the village of Vrăneşti, „Cărbuna" landscape reserve, „Copanca" forest natural reserve within the Dniester National Park, „Flămânda" forest natural reserve. Inclusion in the list of species protected by law and into the 4th edition of the Red Book of the Republic of Moldova, highlighting and taking under state protection new growing sites of the species, the multiplication of the species in *ex-situ* conditions and its repatriation in natural habitats, for the species is recommended.

Dianthus carthusianorum L. **– Garofiţă cartusiană – Гвоздика картузианская**



a b

Figure 3. *Dianthus carthusianorum* L.: a – habitus and bract; b –occurrence in the Republic of Moldova

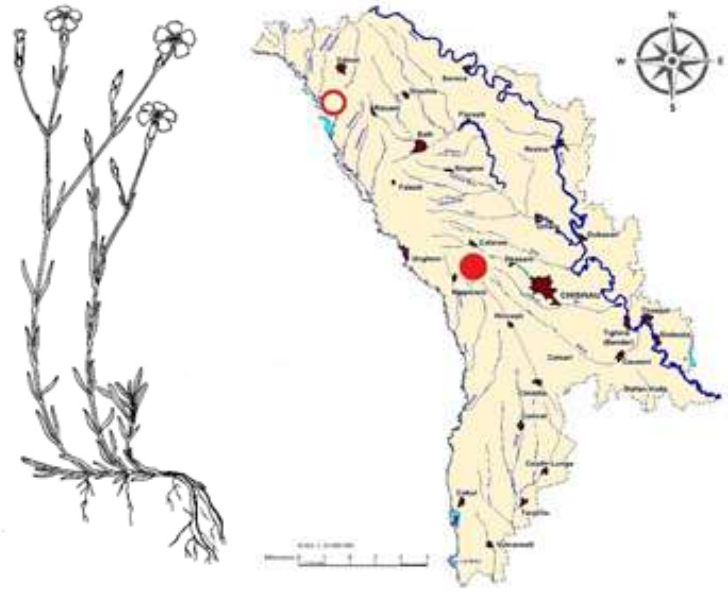
Critically Endangered [CR]. A4cde; B2ab(i,ii,iii,iv). Perennial hemicryptophytic plant (Fig. 3a). It blooms in (May)June-July. It is pratal, mesoxerophilic plant, multiplies by seeds and vegetatively. Ornamental and honey plant.

In the republic it is met very rarely, only in the north-eastern: comm. Haraba (Rîbniţa distr.) UATSN, and central: comm. Bahmut (Călăraşi); comm. Negreşti (Străşeni); in the vicinity of Chişinău; vill. Valea Florii (Hînceşti) (Fig. 3b). It grows at the southern limit of its natural range of distribution. Outside the borders of the republic it grows in Atlantic (Belgium, extinct in the Netherlands), Central (Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Switzerland) and Eastern (Belarus, Ukraine) Europe, the Mediterranean region (Albania, Bulgaria, France, Italy, Sicilia, Spain). Introduced in the Scandinavian peninsula (Sweden), Asia Minor (Turkey) and North America (USA – states Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, Wisconsin).

Species grows on steppe hills, limestone slopes, glades and edges of dry and semi-arid forests. It is met isolated or in small groups with an abundance of 1 (2). The total number of individuals is not established. In the Republic of Moldova protected by the state with category IV [8]. It is territorially protected in the representative sector with forest vegetation «Haraba», natural reserve of medicinal plants «Sărata Galbenă». Inclusion into the 4th edition of the Red Book of the Republic of Moldova, monitoring the condition of the

known population, highlighting new growing sites, the multiplication of the species in *ex-situ* conditions and its repatriation in natural habitats, for the species is recommended.

Dianthus deltoides L. **– Garofiţă triunghiulară – Гвоздика дельтовидная**

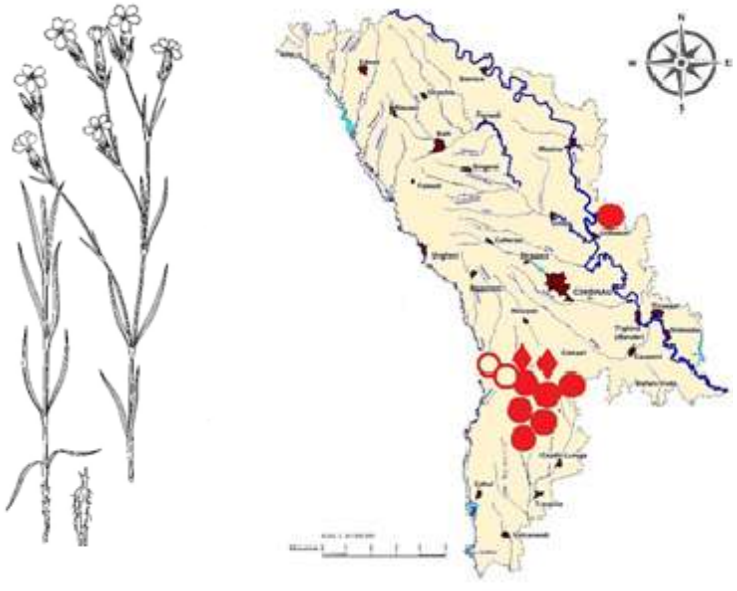


a b

Figure 4. *Dianthus deltoides* L.: a – habitus; b –occurrence in the Republic of Moldova

Critically Endangered [CR]. A4cde; B2ab(i,ii,iii,iv). Perennial hemicryptophytic plant (Fig. 4a). It blooms in June-July. It is meadow mezophilic plant, multiplies by seeds and vegetatively by dividing the rhizome. Decorative, fodder, medicinal, melliferous plant, contains high amounts of saponin. In the Republic it is met rarely in the northwestern (comm. Petruşeni, Râşcani district) and central (com. Micleușeni, Străşeni distr.) part (Fig. 4b). Outside the borders of the republic it grows in Atlantic, Central and Eastern Europe, Mediterranean region, Siberia. Introduced into Far East, Caucasus, North and South America. Plants grow in edges and clearings of oak forests. Since the date of first collection (T.S.Gheideman on 30.08.1966) near the commune of Petruşeni, it has not been reported again, and in 2012 the only existing population was registered near the commune of Micleușeni, Străşeni district, consisting of 40 specimens in the flowering phase. Species protected by law in the Republic of Moldova. Included in the Red Book of the Republic of Moldova (3rd ed.) as a critically endangered species. Inclusion into the 4th edition of the Red Book of the Republic of Moldova, monitoring the condition of the known population, highlighting new growing sites, the multiplication of the species in *ex-situ* conditions and its repatriation in natural habitats, for the species is recommended.

Dianthus guttatus M.Bieb. **– Garofiţă gutulată – Гвоздика пятнистая**



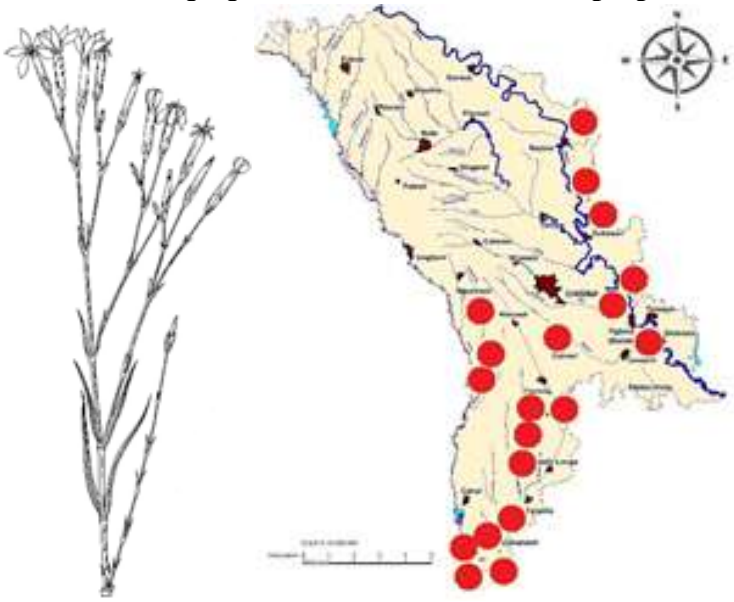
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Figure 5. *Dianthus guttatus* M.Bieb.: a – habitus; b – occurrence in the Republic of Moldova

Vulnerable [VU]. A4ce; B2ab(i,ii,iii). Perennial hemicryptophytic plant (Fig. 5a). It blooms in (June)July-August. It is steppic, xerophilic plant, multiplies by seeds. Decorative, melliferous plant. In the Republic of Moldova it is met rarely in the east: in the vicinity of comm. Goian (Dubăsari, UTAN) and south: comm. Ciucur-Mingir, Javgur (Cimişlia); comm. Sadîc; comm. Bugeac, vill. Dezghingea, Congazcicul de Sus, between the villages of Chirsova and Ferapontievca (Comrat, UTAG), comm. Tomai (Leova) (Fig. 5b). Outside the republic it grows in Central (Romania) and Eastern (Ukraine, Crimea) Europe. Plants are met on hills with steppe vegetation with *Stipa* and *Festuca* species, dry meadows; prefers chernozem, occasionally on loess slopes. Cultivated in the experimental plot of rare species in the National Botanical Garden (Institute). No protection action is taken.

Protected only territorially within the «Iagorlâc» scientific reserve, in steppe sectors in the north of Bugeac «Dezghingea» and «Bugeac». Inclusion in the list of species protected by law and into the 4th edition of the Red Book of the Republic of Moldova, monitoring the condition of known populations, highlighting new growing sites and its repatriation in natural habitats, for the species is recommended.

Dianthus leptopetalus Willd. **– Garofiţă leptopetală – Гвоздика узколепестная**

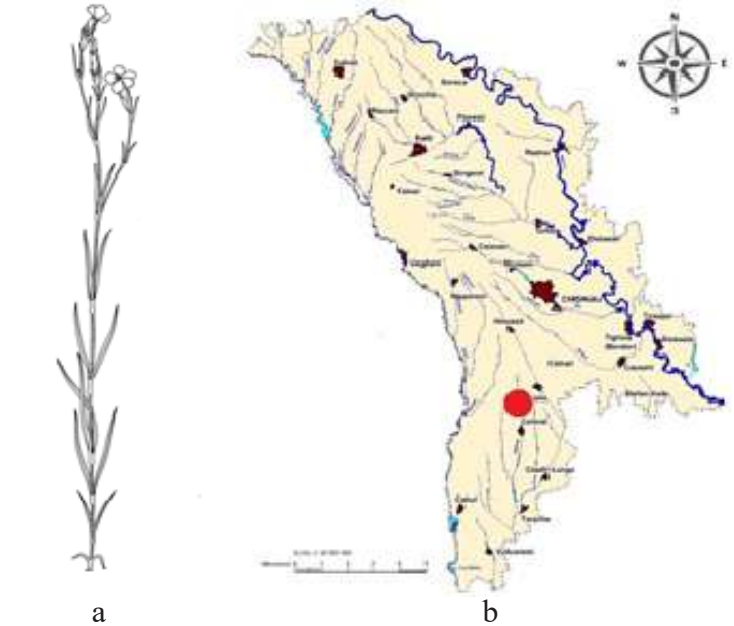


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Figure 6. *Dianthus leptopetalus* Willd.: a – upper part of stem with inflorescence; b – occurrence in the Republic of Moldova

Least Concern [LC]. Perennial hemicryptophytic plant (Fig. 6a). It blooms in June-July. It is steppic, xerophilic plant, multiplies by seeds. Decorative, melliferous plant. In the Republic of Moldova it is found in the basin of the Dniester and Prut rivers and in the southern area: Rîbniţa, Dubăsari, Grigoiopol, Anenii Noi, Leova, Comrat, Cahul districts (Fig. 6b). Outside the borders of the republic it grows in the Central (Romania) and Eastern (Central, Eastern and Southern European Russia, Ukraine), North Caucasus, Minor (Türkiye) and Central (Kazakhstan) Asia, Western Siberia (southern part). Species is met in steppe vegetation, less often on clayey and calcareous hills, prefers chernozem. Plants grow in small, diffuse groups with an abundance of 1. No protection measures has been taken in the Republic of Moldova. The only territorial protection is carried out within the "Iagorlîc" scientific reserve, sectors with steppe vegetation "Bugeac", "Dezghingea" and "Ciumai". Inclusion in the list of species protected by law, monitoring the condition of known populations and highlighting new growing sites, for the species is recommended.

Dianthus pallens M.Bieb. (=*Dianthus pallidiflorus* Ser., *D. meoticus* Klokov) **– Garofiţă palidifloră – Гвоздика бледноцветковая**



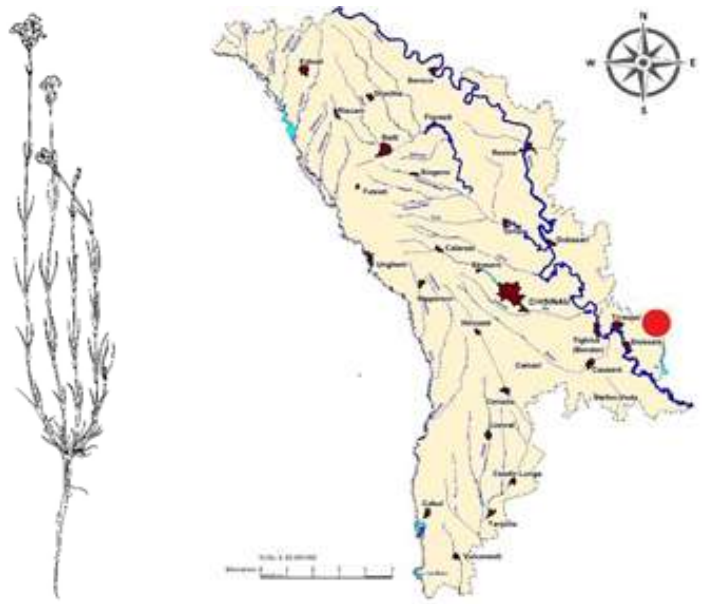
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Figure 7. *Dianthus pallens* M.Bieb.: a – habitus; b – occurrence in the Republic of Moldova

Critically Endangered [**CR**]. A4c; B2ab (i, iii); D; E. Perennial hemicryptophytic plant (Fig. 7a). It blooms in July-August. It is steppic, xerophilic plant, multiplies by seeds. Decorative plant. In the Republic of Moldova it is met in the vicinity of comm. Bugeac, UTA Găgăuzia (Fig. 7b). Outside the borders of the republic it grows in the Eastern (Eastern and Southern European Russia, Ukraine), Crimea, Balkan Peninsula (Bulgaria, Greece), North Caucasus, Minor (Türkiye) Asia. Introduced in the Central European Russia. Species is growing on hills with primary steppe vegetation with prevalence of *Stipa* and *Festuca* species, grows solitarily or forms small, isolated groups of 2-3 individuals with an abundance of 1. The total number of individuals in the

population is unknown. Species protected by law in the Republic of Moldova with category II. Included in the Red Book of the Republic of Moldova (3rd ed.) as critically endangered species. It is territorially protected in the natural reserve of medicinal plants „Bugeac”. Inclusion into the 4th edition of the Red Book of the Republic of Moldova, monitoring the condition of the known population, highlighting new growing sites, the multiplication of the species in *ex-situ* conditions and its repatriation in natural habitats, for this species is recommended.

Dianthus polymorphus M.Bieb. (=*Dianthus diutinus* Kit., *D. platyodon* Klokov) – **Garofiţă polimorfă – Гвоздика изменчивая**



a b

Figure 8. *Dianthus polymorphus* M. Bieb.: a – habitus; b – occurrence in the Republic of Moldova

Critically Endangered [CR]. A4ce; B2ab(ii,iii); C2a; D. Perennial hemicryptophytic plant (Fig. 8a). It blooms in May-September. It is steppic, xerophilic plant, multiplies by seeds. Decorative, melliferous plant. In the Republic of Moldova it is met in the vicinity of vill. Andriaşevca Nouă, UATSN (Fig. 8b). Outside the borders of the republic it grows in the Central (Hungary, Romania) and Eastern (Central and Southern European Russia, Ukraine), Crimea, Balkan Peninsula (Northwestern part), North Caucasus. Species grows on hills with steppe vegetation with dominance of *Stipa* species (*S. pennata* L., *S. pulcherrima* K.Koch, *S. ucrainica* P.A. Smirn.) and *Festuca valesiaca* Gaudin. The only recently found population (May 2013) contains circa 500 mature and juvenile individuals. It grows in small, diffuse groups with an abundance of 1. The total area of the population is about 1000 m^2. Species is included in the Red Book of the Republic of Moldova (3rd ed.) as critically endangered. It is territorially protected in the representative sector with steppe vegetation „Andriaşevca Nouă”. Inclusion in the list of species protected by law, development of measures for sustainable management in the representative sector with steppe vegetation „Andriaşevca Nouă”, highlighting and taking under protection new growing sites, conservation and multiplication of the species in *ex-situ* conditions and its repatriation to natural habitats, for this species is recommended.

Conclusions

Based on the study of literature data, herbarium material and expedition research in recent years, it was established that the genus *Dianthus* L. includes 8 rare species out of 15 established for the vascular flora of the Republic of Moldova. According to the IUCN criteria 8 species, with different degrees of endangerment were assessed: 6 critically endangered species (*D. borbasii* Vandas, *D. capitatus* Balb. ex DC., *D. carthusianorum* L., *D. deltoides* L., *D. pallens* M.Bieb. and *D. polymorphus* M.Bieb.), one vulnerable species (*D. guttatus* M.Bieb.) and one species of least concern (*D. leptopetalus* Willd.).

We propose to include in the list of species protected by law 4 species from genus *Dianthus* L.: *D. borbasii* Vandas, *D. capitatus* Balb. ex DC., *D. guttatus* M.Bieb. and *D. polymorphus* M.Bieb. Into the 4th edition of the Red Book of Republic of Moldova shoud be added 7 threatened species: 6 critically endangered species (*D. borbasii* Vandas, *D. capitatus* Balb. ex DC., *D. carthusianorum* L., *D. deltoides* L., *D. pallens* M.Bieb. and *D. polymorphus* M.Bieb.) and 1 vulnerable (*D. guttatus* M.Bieb.) species.

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