

First report of *Erysiphe aquilegiae* on *Clematis montana* from Pakistan

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Purpose: The present work was done to investigate, characterize and identify powdery mildew fungus that is infecting *Clematis* plants in different regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan. *Clematis* (Ranunculaceae) is an economically important plant as being source of different types of pharmaceutical compounds. In Pakistan, there are 10-11 species of this genus that are mostly present in the temperate areas of the country and are being reported to be infected by powdery mildew disease.

Methods: The plants of *Clematis montana* growing in Ayubia National Park, Abbottabad district, KP, Pakistan have been collected to be infected with powdery mildew fungus. Molecular and morpho-anatomical techniques were used to characterize and identify this powdery mildew fungus.

Results and Conclusions: After careful observations, the fungus is identified as *Erysiphe aquilegiae* that belongs to the largest genus of Erysiphales including about 50% of all species of family Erysiphaceae. This genus is represented by 378 species worldwide with 19 species reported from Pakistan. *Erysiphe aquilegiae* is new record for Pakistan and is an addition to our fungal flora. This work will not only be a baseline for further such studies in selected site but will also help in selection of means to protect this important plant (*Clematis montana*) as this disease can compromise its economic and esthetic value by reducing the plant's floral output and stunting its growth.