

On the identity of Sprengel’s *Jaegeria bellidioides* (Compositae, Heliantheae)

ARY MAILHOS^{1,2*} & JOSÉ MAURICIO BONIFACINO^{1,3}

¹Laboratorio de Botánica, Facultad de Agronomía, Udelar, Garzón 780, Código Postal 12900, Montevideo, Uruguay

²✉ arymailhos@gmail.com;  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9991-1186>

³✉ mbonifa@gmail.com;  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0377-3853>

*Author for correspondence

Abstract

The history of Sprengel’s *Jaegeria bellidioides* has been shrouded in nomenclatural uncertainty, with different authors ascribing it to morphologically distinct taxa. Through the examination of protologs, relevant type material, and digital collections of historic herbaria, we clarify the source of this confusion and provide a nomenclatural solution. Our assessment indicates that its treatment as a synonym of *Jaegeria hirta* is based on an erroneous typification. We therefore designate a lectotype for *Jaegeria bellidioides*, supporting the recognition of *Eclipta bellidioides* as the correct name for the taxon currently known as *Eclipta elliptica*.

Key words: Asteraceae, nomenclature, South America, taxonomy

Introduction

During the revision of Compositae for the Flora of Uruguay (Bonifacino *et al.* 2025, 2026), we encountered conflicting interpretations of the name *Jaegeria bellidioides* Sprengel (1826: 591), with some authors assigning it to *Jaegeria* Kunth in Humboldt *et al.* (1820: 218 [ed. fol.]) (Millerieae) and others to *Eclipta* Linnaeus (1771: 157) (Heliantheae). This uncertainty has a long history. Schultz Bipontinus was the first to suggest that *J. bellidioides* was better treated as a species of *Eclipta* (Schultz 1857), although he did not publish a formal combination; this was later effected by Blake (1930), who recognized it as conspecific with *Eclipta elliptica* Candolle (1836: 491). Torres (1968), in a subsequent revision of *Jaegeria*, placed *J. bellidioides* in synonymy under *J. hirta* (Lagasca y Segura 1816: 31) Lessing (1832: 223), designating a specimen at P as lectotype—an interpretation that has since been widely followed (e.g. Orchard & Cross 2013; Ariza Espinar 2015b; Zuloaga *et al.* 2025; Govaerts 2026). However, this has generated some confusion in herbaria, as we have seen specimens of *Eclipta* previously identified as *E. bellidioides* being subsequently listed as *J. hirta*, a completely different plant (Fig. 1).

Our examination of the relevant type material and protolog has raised questions about the current application of the name *Jaegeria bellidioides*. Here we evaluate the status of the lectotype designated by Torres in light of the original description and the available original material, and propose a nomenclatural solution in accordance with the International Code of Nomenclature (Madrid Code; Turland *et al.* 2025). We hope this will help to clarify and stabilize the nomenclature surrounding this entity.

Material & Methods

We carried out a comprehensive examination of *Eclipta* and *Jaegeria* digital specimens hosted at B, G, K, and P (acronyms according to Thiers 2026, updated continuously). We analyzed protologs and type specimens for all relevant names, and consulted regional floras and pertinent treatments for both genera (Torres 1968; Orchard & Cross 2013; Ariza Espinar 2015a, 2015b; Alves *et al.* 2026).

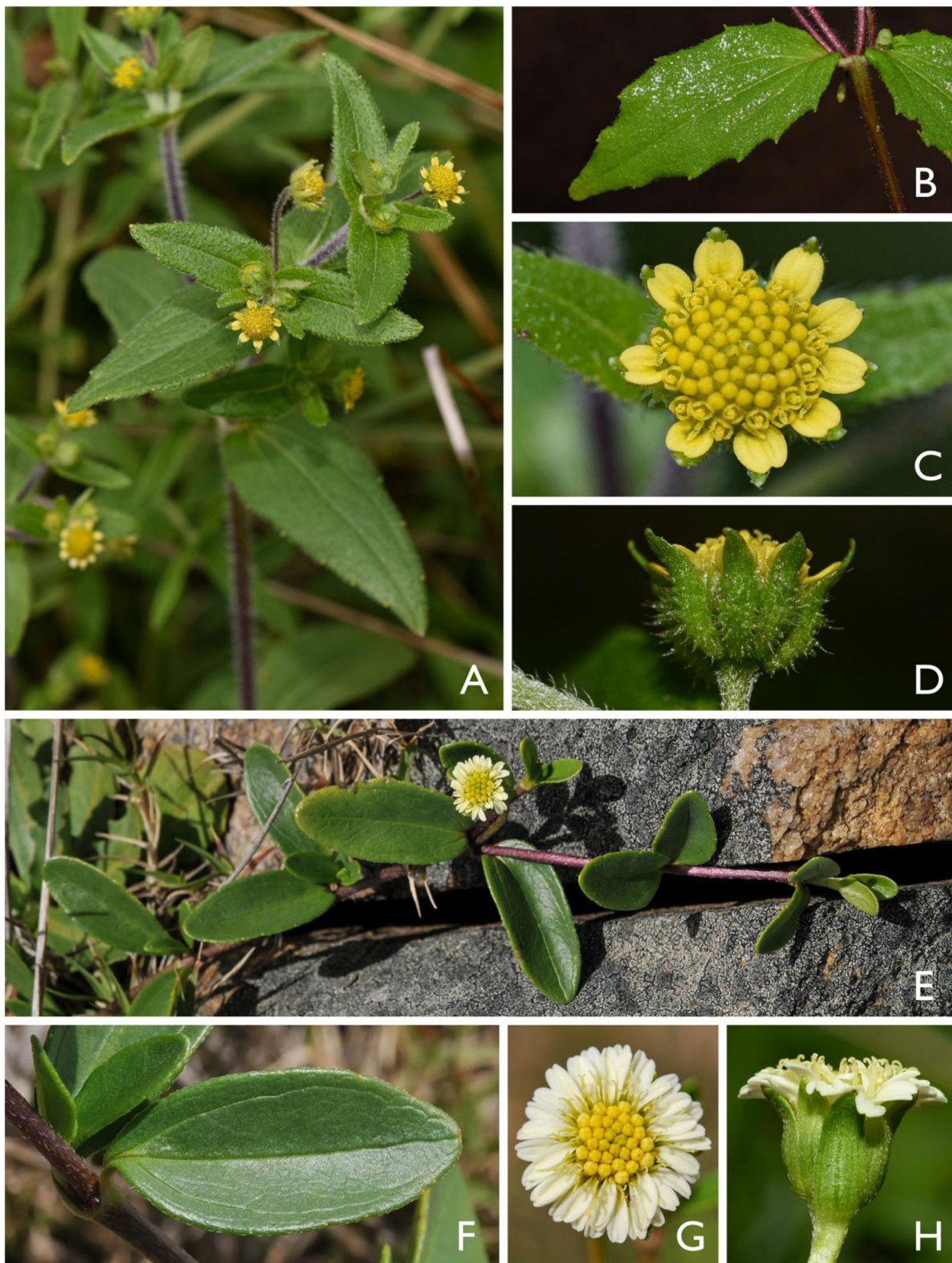


FIGURE 1. A–D. *Jaegeria hirta* (Lag.) Less. A. Habit. B. Leaf. C. Capitulum, upper view. D. Capitulum, lateral view. E–H. *Eclipta bellidioides* (Spreng.) Sch.Bip. ex S.F.Blake (= *Eclipta elliptica* DC.) E. Habit. F. Leaf. G. Capitulum, upper view. H. Capitulum, lateral view. Photos by J.M. Bonifacino.

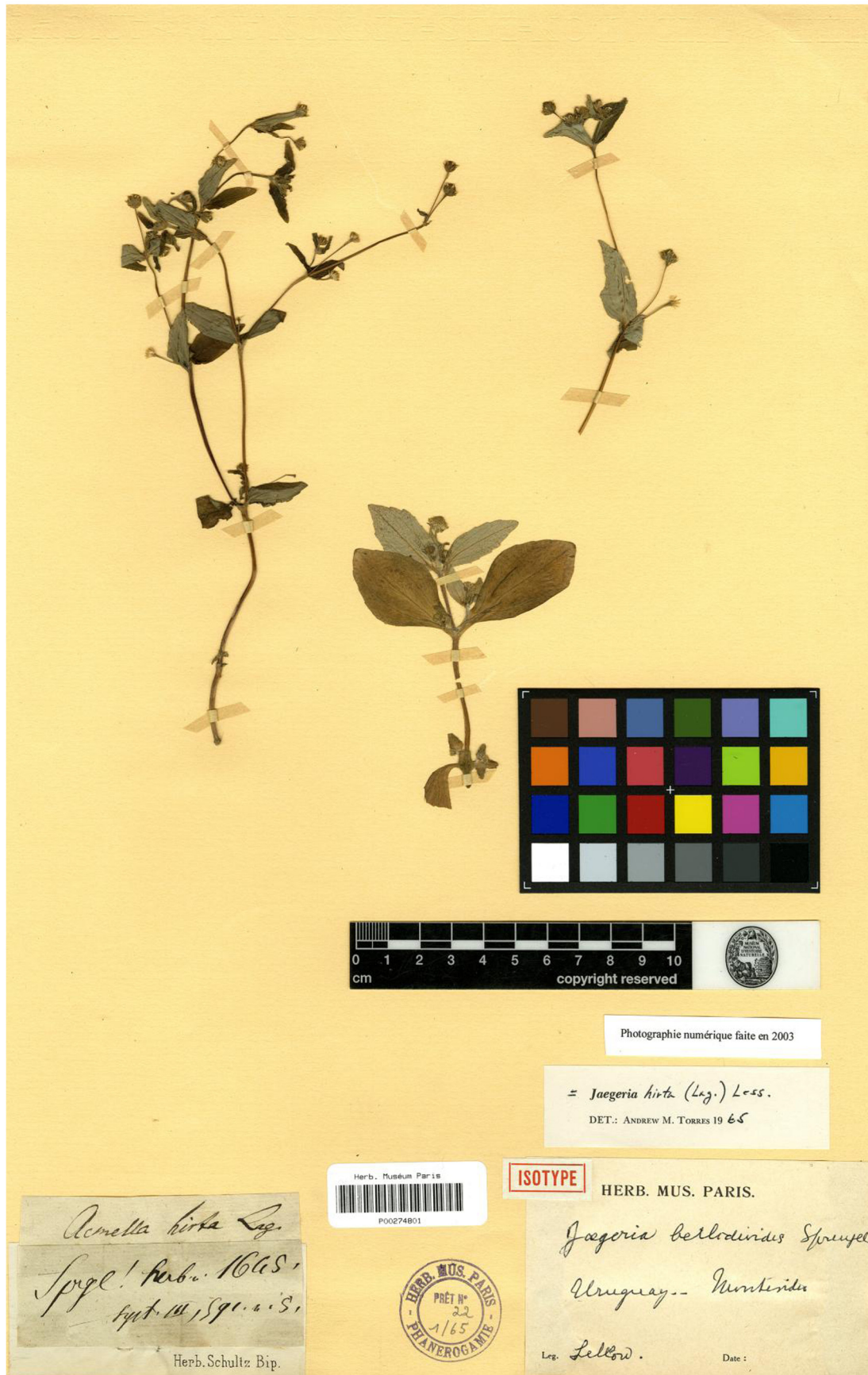


FIGURE 2. Specimen P00274801, designated as a lectotype of *Jaegeria bellidioides* Spreng. by Torres (1968). Note Sprengel's original handwritten label identifying it as *Acmella hirta* Lag. (bottom left), and the more recent label from the Paris herbarium reading *J. bellidioides* (bottom right). Herbarium image © Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris (France). Full resolution image available at <https://coldb.mnhn.fr/catalognumber/mnhn/p/p00274801>.

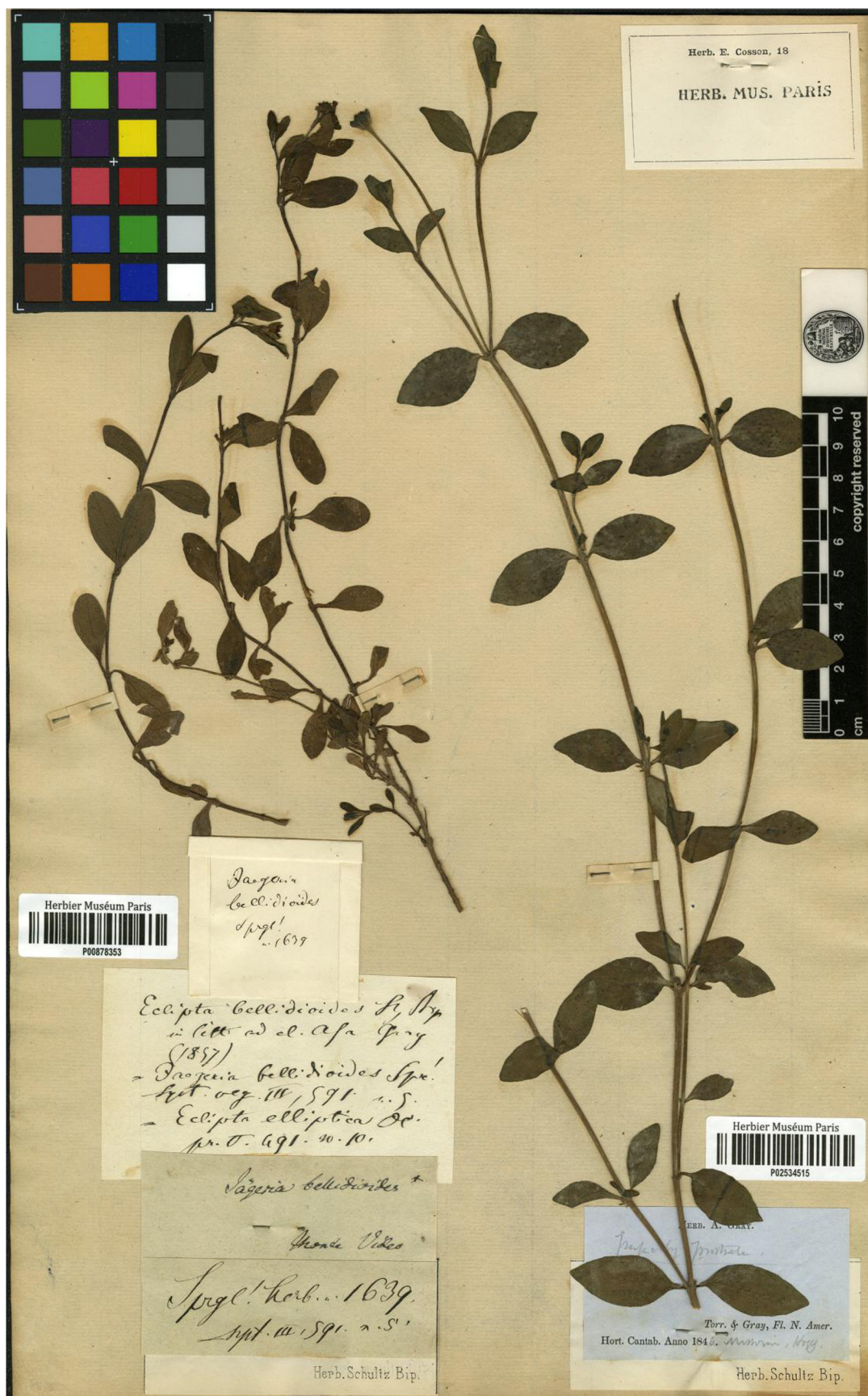


FIGURE 3. Specimen P00878353 (left-hand specimen), designated here as a lectotype of *Jaegeria bellidioides* Spreng. Note Sprengel's original label identifying it as said species (bottom left). Herbarium image © Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris (France). Full resolution image available at <http://coldb.mnhn.fr/catalognumber/mnhn/p/p00878353>.

Discussion

Re-examination of the specimen designated as a lectotype of *Jaegeria bellidioides* (P00274801) by Torres (1968; Fig. 2) casts doubt on its status as original material of this species. The label bearing this name, along with the associated collection data (“Uruguay—Montevideo. Leg. Sellow”) has been added at a later date and does not form part of Sprengel’s original herbarium. In contrast, the specimen bears a second label in Sprengel’s handwriting (see Machoy *et al.* 2021) reading “*Acmella hirta* Lag. Sprgl! herb. n. 1645. Syst. III, 591. n. 5.”

Specimen P00274801 is also difficult to reconcile with the protologue of *Jaegeria bellidioides*, which describes plants with “*foliis ellipticis integerrimis in petiolum decurrentibus strigosis, pedunculis terminalibus*” (elliptic, entire leaves, decurrent into the petiole, strigose, with terminal peduncles). The specimen instead bears leaves with visibly serrate margins and capitula on axillary rather than terminal peduncles, and cannot therefore be regarded as original material of *Jaegeria bellidioides*. Torres was correct in recognizing it as *Jaegeria hirta* rather than *Eclipta*, but the later-added label identifying it as *J. bellidioides* reflects either a mistake or a determination made independently of Sprengel’s protologue. A specimen in such clear conflict with the original description is not suitable as a type.

While most of Sellow’s collections at B have been destroyed, Sprengel’s Compositae were acquired by Schultz-Bipontinus and are now housed at P (Stafleu & Cowan 1985). Examination of the digital collections hosted at P reveals a specimen that can be identified as original material of *Jaegeria bellidioides* (P00878353; Fig. 3). This specimen conforms fully to the protologue and bears Sprengel’s original handwritten labels, including the species name followed by an asterisk—consistent with his notation in *Systema Vegetabilium*, indicating a newly described species—the locality “Monte Video” as cited in the protologue, and the publication details. The specimen also bears a label by Schultz Bipontinus reading “*Eclipta bellidioides* Sz. Bip. in litt.”, already recognizing *Eclipta elliptica* as a synonym.

In accordance with Arts. 9.10 and 9.19 (Madrid Code; Turland *et al.* 2025), the type designated by Torres is here superseded: specimen P00274801 conflicts on several points with the protologue and does not constitute original material, rendering Torres’s lectotypification invalid under Art. 9.3 and amounting to an inadvertent neotypification. Two conditions for superseding a neotype under Art. 9.19 are therefore met—the designated specimen is in serious conflict with the protologue, and original material consistent with it has now been located. Specimen P00878353 at P is accordingly designated here as the lectotype of *Jaegeria bellidioides*.

Eclipta bellidioides (Spreng.) Sch.Bip. ex Blake (1930: 242) is therefore reinstated as the correct name for the taxon commonly known as *Eclipta elliptica*, a species native to eastern Argentina, southern Brazil, and Uruguay, where it occurs primarily in open, mesic to seasonally wet habitats. An updated nomenclatural synopsis is presented below.

Eclipta bellidioides (Spreng.) Sch.Bip. ex Blake (1930: 242). *Jaegeria bellidioides* Sprengel (1826: 591). Type:—URUGUAY. Montevideo, *F. Sellow s.n.* (lectotype, **designated here**: P [P00878353!]) ex Herb. Sprengel 1639). Additional original material:—URUGUAY. “Brasilia”, 1821 [see Urban 1893], *F. Sellow d 59* (K [K001030566!]), US [US01758821!]). (Fig. 1 E–H; Fig. 3)

= *Eclipta elliptica* Candolle (1836: 491). Type:—BRAZIL. Rio Grande do Sul, 1824, *F. Sellow d 2032* (Moraes 2023), *Herb. Mus. Imp. Bras. 1024* (holotype P [P02534514!]).

= *Wollastonia prostrata* Candolle (1836: 549). Type:—BRAZIL. Rio Grande, *F. Sellow s.n.*, *Herb. Mus. Imp. Bras. 1073* (holotype P [P00710030!]).

= *Spilanthes wedelioides* Hooker & Arnott (1841: 318). Type:—ARGENTINA. La Plata, *J. Tweedie s.n.* (holotype E [E00322556!]).

= *Eclipta peduncularis* J.Rémy in Gay (1849: 113). Type:—CHILE. *C. Gay s.n.* (lectotype, **designated here**: P [P02534517!]; isoelectotype K [K000487528!]).

Note:—The specimen designated here as a lectotype of *Jaegeria bellidioides* is mounted on the same sheet as another conspecific specimen originating from the herbarium of Asa Gray, each bearing its own barcode. The presence of two barcodes is a recent addition to the sheet, which was previously identified by the single barcode P02534515. Moraes (2023) cited this barcode in reference to Sellow’s specimen; however, that specimen should now be referred to by the new barcode P00878353.

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