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On the Distribution and Relationships of the South-West Asian Species of *Eryngium* L. (Apiaceae-Saniculoideae)

of

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**Abstract:** This paper deals with the Old World species of *Eryngium* L. which grow mostly in regions with a Mediterranean type climate. Two centres of diversity are visible: one in the Western Mediterranean (Iberian Peninsula, Morocco), and the other one in South-West Asia. Distribution maps are presented for several species from South-West Asia, which is probably the genus' most important centre of diversity. A preliminary new classification of the genus *Eryngium* is presented, including a new combination (*Eryngium* subgenus *Fruticosum* (Wolff) Wörz stat. nov.). Both the species and the sectional diversity are conspicuously present in Turkey, where 9 of 14 sections occur. This sectional diversity decreases in an easterly direction towards Central Asia. Five Mediterranean species are much more closely related to some North American *Eryngiums* than to the other Old World ones. Not related to the American sections is Sect. *Palmito* H. Wolff, although its species bear grass-like leaves similar to some *Eryngiums* from South America.

**Key Words:** *Eryngium*, Apiaceae, Saniculoideae, South-West Asia, phytogeography, infrageneric classification

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