

FAQ's. *Linaria dalmatica* and *Linaria genistifolia*

Here is an account from Kerry Barringer of Brooklyn Botanic Garden (Personal communication June 2003) about how to differentiate *L. dalmatica* and *L. genistifolia*. From this account it sounds as if *L. genistifolia* is not present in North America.

SWEMP QUESTION: There is some confusion regarding the taxonomic differences between *Linaria dalmatica* and *L. genistifolia*. Can you describe what characteristics separate the two species?

- Dr. Barringer's answer: *Linaria dalmatica* and *Linaria genistifolia* can be hard to tell apart. A lot of people consider these two to be subspecies of a broadly defined *Linaria genistifolia*, so you may see them referred to that way. The most recent treatments keep them separate in Europe, so I'll follow that scheme. Only *Linaria dalmatica* (or *Linaria genistifolia ssp dalmatica*) is recognized as being in the United States.

The problem is that both *L. genistifolia* and *L. dalmatica* are so variable that it can be tough to find characters that distinguish the two reliably. Try these:

- In general, *L. dalmatica* has bigger flowers.
- The mouth of the flower of *L. dalmatica* is usually wider than that of *L. genistifolia*.
- *L. dalmatica* is usually between 5 and 12 mm wide, while *L. genistifolia* is less than 6 mm wide.
- The corolla of *L. dalmatica* can be between 25 and 35 mm long, while the corolla of *L. genistifolia* is less than 25 mm long, usually between 15 and 20.
- Also, *L. genistifolia* tends to have pure yellow flowers without markings, while *L. dalmatica* has yellow flowers with an orange palate.
- Later in the season, *L. dalmatica* plants usually have lots of sterile stems, but sterile stems are extremely rare in *L. genistifolia*. Usually *L. genistifolia* has only fertile stems.

L. dalmatica is the one we sometimes see here in the east (eastern United States.) It is occasionally cultivated still, and escapes readily. We see it on roadsides and railroad right of ways, on rocky or sandy soils. I haven't seen *L. genistifolia* cultivated or escaped here, but it is very weedy in Europe.

