

SAXIFLORA

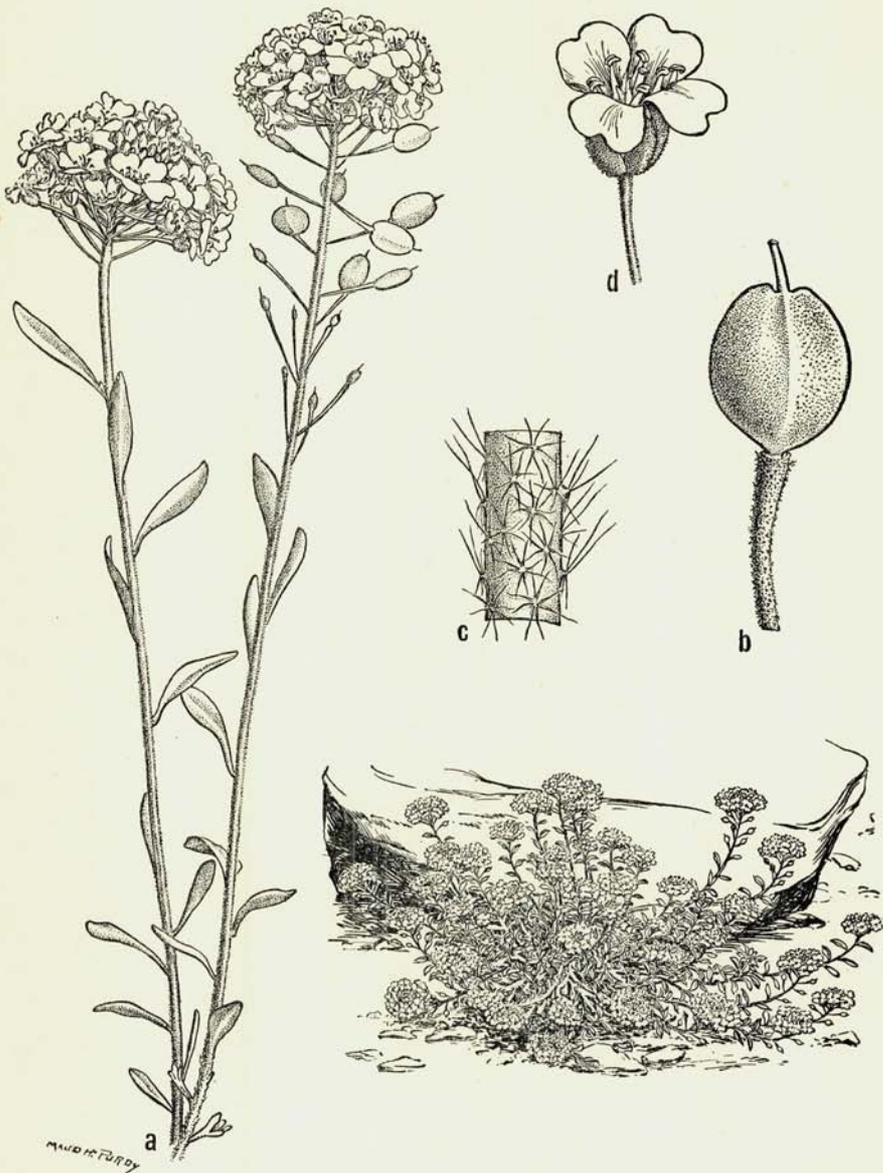
PLATE 4

Alyssum scardicum
(*Cruciferae*)

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Alyssum scardicum

Explanation of plate. a. flowering stems x. b. capsule x. c. pedicel, showing long-branched stellate hairs. d. flower, enlarged.

Alyssum scardicum

This *Alyssum* belongs to the *montanum* group, which extends through the mountains of Southern Europe in a most bewildering complexity of forms, for which the collective name, *A. montanum*, is often given, but which does not at all sufficiently differentiate the plants for horticultural purposes. *A. Wulfenianum* Bernhardt was divided into four species by Wettstein, of which our plant appears to be *A. scardicum* Wettstein (*A. Wulfenianum* Grisebach, not of Bernhardt). So great is the confusion that it seems to us best to adopt the unequivocal (and botanically correct) name *A. scardicum*, which cannot be misunderstood. The plant was originally described from Albania. *A. repens* Baumgarten, which in Wettstein's treatment is exceedingly close to *A. scardicum*, is differentiated by Hayek by the round capsules and by the presence of simple as well as stellate hairs on the pedicels. This is literally splitting hairs, but shows how difficult the problem is.

Alyssum scardicum with us seldom lasts more than a year or two. The lack of permanence in the individual is no great drawback, because the species is perpetuated by means of self-sown seeds. Our usual practice, however, is to sow the seeds in a cool greenhouse in March. The seedlings are transplanted individually to three-inch pots, which are plunged in a cold frame during the summer and planted in their flowering positions in the fall. Probably if a particularly good form should make its appearance, it could be propagated vegetatively by means of cuttings made during the summer.

This *Alyssum* is an excellent rock garden plant of easy culture, demanding only sunshine and a porous, well-drained soil. It seems to thrive best in our "moraine," where the "soil" consists of bluestone chips, sand, and leafmold, in the proportions of 5-1-1, to a depth of eighteen inches. Its value is enhanced by its long period of bloom, from about the third week in April until the end of May. When the flowers are *passé* the old flower stems should be sheared unless seeds are required. *Alyssum scardicum* is particularly charming when its shoots are seen trailing over the edge of a rock.

Alyssum scardicum (received as *A. montanum*) in the Brooklyn Botanic Garden is usually in full bloom by the first of May. One-year-old plants are then about six inches in diameter with numerous ascending stems four or five inches high. These are topped with golden-yellow flowers, each a little over a quarter of an inch in diameter, in heads about one inch across. As the season progresses the flowering stems elongate. When out of bloom,

the plant makes a rather loose mat of more or less trailing stems clothed with grayish green, narrow-oval leaves. Mature leaves are about five-eighths of an inch long and not quite three-sixteenths of an inch broad at the widest point. The foliage, though somewhat hoary, is much greener than typical *A. montanum*, in which the stellate hairs are appressed. Old plants attain a diameter of about one foot.

MONTAGUE FREE
H. K. SVENSON

Alyssum Wulfenianum Grisebach, Spicil. 1: 276. 1843. Not of Bernhardi 1813.

Alyssum scardicum Wettstein, Bibl. Bot. 5²⁶: 24. 1892.

Alyssum montanum subsp. *scardicum* Hayek, in Fedde, Repert. Sp. Nov. Beih. 30¹: 434. 1925.

Alyssum montanum var. *grandiflorum* Hort. in Parey, Blumengaertneri 1: 649. 1931.