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MORPHOLOGICAL VARIABILITY OF *IRIS PUMILA* (IRIDACEAE) IN THE LOWER VOLGA REGION AND THE SOUTH URALS

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The article presents the results of the analysis of 22 populations of dwarf iris (*Iris pumila* L.) from two regions – the South Urals (Republic of Bashkortostan) and the Lower Volga region (Saratov Region). It is found that the plants of *I. pumila* populations from the two geographical localities differ markedly from each other. The plants from the South Urals have taller generative shoots, larger structural elements of the flower and, in particular, longer and wider leaves. In turn, the plants from the Lower Volga region have larger diameter of the flower and diameter of the clone. Ordination by the methods of principal components and non-metric multidimensional scaling also convincingly separates the population samples from the two geographical areas. At the same time, a larger spread of points corresponding to the set of average values of morphological characteristics of the plants from the Lower Volga region indicates a greater heterogeneity of growing conditions of the species in this geographical area compared to the South Urals. In the Lower Volga region, the distribution of the morphological features variation along the geographical gradient is primarily affected by broad temperature amplitude. It is also aided by the altitude above sea level of the places where populations grow in this region. In the South Urals, the greater similarity of morphological parameters of the plants, regardless of the spatial position of populations in this geographical area, is primarily due to narrower temperature amplitude.

Key words: Iris pumila, Iridaceae, geographic variability, morphometric parameters, Lower Volga region, South Urals

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