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A new species of *Croton* section *Cleodora* (Euphorbiaceae s.s.) from Minas Gerais, Brazil

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Abstract

Croton stellatoferrugineus, a new species from Brazil, is here described and illustrated. This new species is endemic to dry forests at the base of "Pico do Itambé", the highest point of the Espinhaço range, in Minas Gerais State, occurring at 700–900 m elevation. *Croton stellatoferrugineus* presents morphological features consistent with its inclusion in *Croton* section *Cleodora*, due to its shrubby habit, petiolar basilaminar glands, 15 stamens, pistillate flowers with quincuncial aestivation, and multifid styles connate at the base.

Resumo

Croton stellatoferrugineus, uma nova espécie do Brasil, é aqui descrita e ilustrada. Esta nova espécie é endêmica das florestas secas na base do "Pico do Itambé", o ponto mais alto da cadeia do Espinhaço, no Estado de Minas Gerais, ocorrendo de 700–900 m de altitude. *Croton stellatoferrugineus* possui características morfológicas que permitem incluí-lo em *Croton* seção *Cleodora*, tais sejam seu habito arbustivo, glândulas do pecíolo basilaminares, 15 estames, flores pistiladas de prefloração quincuncial e estiletes multífidos conados na base.

Key words: *Croton stellatoferrugineus*, *Croton* section *Cleodora*, Espinhaço Range, Minas Gerais, Brazil

Introduction

Croton Linnaeus (1753: 1004) is ranked as the 11th biggest flowering plant genus according to Frodin (2004), with an estimated 1223 species (Govaerts *et al.*, 2000). The genus occurs mostly in tropical regions worldwide, but also with some representatives in subtropical and northern temperate areas, and most of its species are important elements of secondary vegetation, which make many species useful for reforestation of degraded forests. Its main centers of diversity in the Neotropics are Brazil, the West Indies, and Mexico (Burger & Huft, 1995). Even with a large number of species already known for the genus, many species have been described for the Neotropical region in the last decade (Secco *et al.* 2001; Secco 2004; Gordillo & Luna 2005; Secco *et al.* 2005; Smith 2006; Riina *et al.* 2007; Caruzo *et al.* 2008; Cordeiro *et al.* 2008; Lima & Pirani 2008; van Ee & Berry 2009; Secco 2009; Caruzo *et al.* in press; Carneiro-Torres *et al.* in press). Brazil has approximately 350 species of *Croton*, including herbs, shrubs, trees and rarely lianas, occupying all kind of habitats, with the greatest number of species concentrated in the eastern part of the country. A new species of *Croton* sect. *Cleodora* (Klotzsch 1841: 196) Baillon (1858: 369) is described here. *Croton stellatoferrugineus* Caruzo & Cordeiro is known only from the "Pico do Itambé", the highest point of the Espinhaço range in central Minas Gerais state, southeastern Brazil, where it grows in dry forests.

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