



***Eleocharis endounifascis*: A new species of *Eleocharis* subgenus *Limnochloa* (Cyperaceae) from northern South America.**

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Abstract

A new species, *Eleocharis endounifascis*, is described and illustrated. This species inhabits standing water in disturbed, open habitats, occurring among a mosaic of wet forest, and probably also flourishes in sunny, seasonally inundated wetlands from Belize to southeastern Venezuela and Guyana to Brazil. It was previously confused with *Eleocharis interstincta* in herbarium collections and floristic works.

Key words: Brazil, Guayana Shield, Guyana, taxonomy, Venezuela

Introduction

Eleocharis R.Br. is a cosmopolitan genus of at least 250 species of herbaceous annuals and perennials found in most habitats throughout the world. The genus exhibits a conserved morphology with flowers almost always borne in solitary, unbranched, terminal spikelets, leaves reduced to tubular, non-photosynthetic sheaths occurring at the base of the plants' culms, and the culms serving as the primary photosynthetic organs. Within these morphological constrictions however, considerable diversity of form exists (Hinchliff & Roalson 2009), and morphological convergence appears widespread (Roalson & Hinchliff 2007, Roalson *et al.* in press). The current classification recognizes numerous supraspecific classification units (González Elizondo & Peterson 1997), but many of them are not monophyletic (Roalson *et al.* in press).

Recent revisionary studies in *Eleocharis* are limited (but see Roalson *et al.* in press, Hinchliff *et al.* in press), and many species remain undescribed or poorly known to science (González Elizondo & Peterson 1997, Roalson & Friar 2000, Roalson *et al.* in press). However, this is an area of active investigation and considerable effort has been recently devoted to descriptions of new taxa and rediscoveries/reinstatements of previously synonymized or overlooked species. Taxa from tropical Central and South America have received a great deal of attention (Roalson 1999, González Elizondo & Smith 2002, Mereles & González Elizondo 2003, Rosen 2006, Trevisan & Boldrini 2006, González Elizondo *et al.* 2007, Trevisan *et al.* 2007, González Elizondo *et al.* 2008a, b).

Here we describe a new species of *Eleocharis* subgenus *Limnochloa* from northeastern South America. Subgenus *Limnochloa* is among the most morphologically distinctive of the natural clades of *Eleocharis*. Its species are generally robust, partially to fully aquatic plants of wet or seasonally wet tropical lowlands. The species of subgenus *Limnochloa* are distinguished by their typically reticulate achenes, which are large in comparison to other *Eleocharis* species (as are the plants themselves), and by the characteristics of the lowest inflorescence glume of each spikelet that often appears to be more or less a continuation of the subtending culm and is frequently fertile (González Elizondo & Peterson 1997). This subgenus includes the only