



Three new species of *Habenaria* (Orchidaceae) from Serra da Canastra, Minas Gerais, Brazil

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Abstract

As part of a floristic survey of the genus *Habenaria* in Serra da Canastra, Minas Gerais, Brazil, three new species of *Habenaria* (Orchidaceae, Orchideae), *H. psammophila*, *H. pseudoculicina* and *H. canastrensis*, are described and illustrated. *Habenaria psammophila* also occurs in the state of Goiás and the Federal District, in the central plateau, whereas *H. canastrensis* and *H. pseudoculicina* are known only locally. These are the first records of endemic taxa of Orchidaceae from Serra da Canastra and further highlight the rich endemic flora of this region.

Keywords: cerrado, campo rupestre, endemism, orchids

Introduction

Habenaria Willd. (1805: 5, 44) (Orchidinae, Orchideae, Orchidaceae) is a large genus of approximately 848 terrestrial species (Govaerts 2008) distributed through the tropical and subtropical regions of the Old and New Worlds (Pridgeon *et al.* 2001). The main centers of diversity of the genus are in Brazil, southern and central Africa, and East Asia (Kurzweil & Weber 1992). Brazil, with approximately 170 species (Hoehne 1940, Pabst & Dungs 1975), is the country with the largest number of *Habenaria* species in the New World and possibly also worldwide. *Habenaria* is also the largest orchid genus in Brazil. The Brazilian species were revised by Cogniaux (1893–1896) in *Flora Brasiliensis* and Hoehne (1940) in *Flora Brasilica*, but identification of many species is still a difficult task.

The main centers of diversity of the genus in Brazil are cerrado, a species-rich savanna vegetation covering approximately two million km² of central Brazil (Ratter *et al.* 1997), and campos rupestres of the central and southeastern regions. Among the *Habenaria* species-rich areas in central Brazil is the core region of the cerrado vegetation, including the Federal District (5783 km²), which has 77 taxa (Batista & Bianchetti 2003), and Minas Gerais, where 81 species are known (Pabst & Dungs 1975).

In Minas Gerais, some of the major centers of plant diversity are found in mountain ranges, particularly the Espinhaço range, in the center of the state (Drummond *et al.* 2005, Rapini *et al.* 2002, 2008, Versieux & Wendt 2007). Another species-rich area is Serra da Canastra, located in the southwestern region of the state (Romero & Nakajima 1999, Nakajima & Semir 2001, Romero & Martins 2002, Farinaccio & Mello-Silva 2004). The area is formed by two isolated metamorphic quartzite plateaus (known as Chapadões), separated by a large valley, with elevations varying between 900 and 1496 m. The uplands are covered mostly by grasslands and typical campos rupestres vegetation. The region is located between the Brazilian central