



Lectotypification of the taxa of Adolpho Ducke from the Brazilian Amazon

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Abstract

Adolpho Ducke was one of the most important Brazilian botanists during the first half of the 20th Century, dedicating more than 50 years to collecting, cataloguing and identifying of the Amazonian flora. The majority of his collections are deposited at the herbaria of the Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi (MG) and Rio de Janeiro Botanical Garden (RB). The latter contains about 1,500 types collected by Ducke and amongst them, around 900 taxa are described by him. In many of his publications he did not clearly indicate a holotype. The present work discusses the lectotypification of 23 names published by Ducke.

Introduction

Italian-born botanist Adolpho Ducke (1876–1959) contributed greatly to the knowledge of the Brazilian Amazonian flora during the first half of the 20th century (Egler & Cavalcante 1963). In 1889 Ducke, who had studied under the eminent entomologist Fries, was recruited by Emílio Goeldi, of the Museu Paraense (currently Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi-Herbarium, MG), in Belém, state of Pará, to work on Hymenoptera, and indeed Ducke's initial Amazonian publications were about bees. However, his interest for botany, especially for trees increased gradually under the influence of Jacques Huber, a Swiss botanist who worked many years at the Museu Paraense (Archer 1962, Egler & Cavalcante 1963). Ducke worked in Belém until 1918, when he moved to Rio de Janeiro, where he joined the Rio de Janeiro Botanic Garden staff until his retirement in 1945. Throughout his career Ducke continued to study the Brazilian Amazon, leading many field expeditions to collect living plants to cultivate at the Botanical Garden's arboretum and dried specimens to be incorporated in the herbarium (Egler & Cavalcante 1963).

The Rio de Janeiro Botanical Garden herbarium (RB) holds about half a million specimens, of which 50,000 are from the Brazilian Amazon, and 9,500 of these were collected by Ducke. The RB type-collection holds approximately 7,000 specimens, of which a large proportion (1,500) were collected by Ducke (21.5%). These numbers demonstrate the magnitude of the legacy left by Ducke to the knowledge of one of the most diverse rain forest regions in the world.

During his life, Ducke described about 900 plant species and 50 new plant genera, depositing the types at MG and RB. In many cases, he cited more than one collection in the protologue for each new taxon, as was the custom at the time, without designating one of these as the type. Only a few samples have been put under his personal number series (Fig. 1-A), causing much confusion. For the remainder he used herbarium catalogue numbers, either on the sheets and/or in the protologues (Fig. 1-D). Also, it is a common practice in Brazilian herbaria to assign a catalogue number to all their collections, therefore the same collection may have multiple numbers, depending on which herbarium it is housed (Fig. 1-B and C).