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Mezilaurus introrsa (Lauraceae), a new species from Colombia

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Abstract

A new species of *Mezilaurus* from Colombia is described and illustrated in this paper. This species, *Mezilaurus introrsa*, is so far only known from the Ecological Station of Caparú in southeastern Colombia, Vaupés state, where it occurs in seasonally inundated forest, locally called “igapó”.

Key words. Morphology, Neotropics, South America, taxonomy, Vaupés

Introduction

Mezilaurus Taubert (1892: 21) comprises about 20 species of trees and shrubs, known from Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, French Guyana, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela to central-western and southeastern Brazil. The great majority of species are found in the Amazon forest, while a few occur in the Brazilian Atlantic Forest, the Andean foothills, neotropical semi-deciduous seasonal forest and in the Brazilian savanna (Cerrado) (van der Werff 1987).

Mezilaurus can be recognized by the leaves clustered at the tips of the branches, a product of its rhythmic growth, bisexual flowers with 3 fertile stamens representing the third androecial whorl, erect, 2-locular anthers, absence of staminal glands and a fruit seated on a small, plate-like cupule with persistent tepals.

Mezilaurus has close relationship with *Williamodendron* Kubitzki & Richter (1987: 50) confirmed by phylogenetic analyses based on molecular data (Rohwer 2000; Rohwer & Rudolph 2005) and morphological and wood anatomical studies (Kubitzki & Richter 1987). The two genera share leaves clustered at the tips of the branches, as a result of rhythmic growth, bisexual flowers with 3 fertile stamens, representing the third androecial whorl, and fruits with a plate-like cupules. The difference between the two genera is found in the anthers: *Mezilaurus* possesses 2-locular anthers, while in *Williamodendron* they are 4-locular. Kubitzki & Richter (1987) described *Williamodendron* including two 4-locular species treated by van der Werff (1987) as *Mezilaurus*, and listed also differences in wood and bark anatomy.

In the Neotropics, bisexual flowers, with 3 fertile, 2-locular anthers are present also in *Licaria* Aublet (1775: 313), *Mocinnodaphne* Lorea-Hernández (1995: 26), two species of *Aiouea* Aublet (1775: 310) and *Yasunia sessilifolia* van der Werff (in van der Werff & Nishida 2010: 494). However, those taxa possess an even distribution of leaves on the branches and larger cupules. Current studies on *Mezilaurus* have revealed a new species from Colombia and its description follows below.

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