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Discovery through photography: *Amyema nickrentii*, a new species of Loranthaceae from Aurora Province, Philippines

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Abstract

Amyema nickrentii Barcelona & Pelser is described here as a new mistletoe species in family Loranthaceae. It was discovered through plant photography fieldwork for the Co's Digital Flora of the Philippines website in coastal forest at Dicasalarin Cove, Baler, Aurora Province, Philippines. *Amyema nickrentii* differs from all other described *Amyema* species in having a whorled leaf arrangement with mostly nine flat linear leaves per node. This new species is named in honor of Daniel L. Nickrent, an esteemed expert on parasitic plants.

Introduction

Amyema Van Tieghem (1894a: 506) is a genus of epiphytic hemi-parasitic plants that is distributed from mainland southeast Asia to Australia and the southwest Pacific (Danser 1935, Barlow 1974, 1984, 1992). In the most recent comprehensive treatment of the genus, Barlow (1992) recognized 92 species and, to our knowledge, no new species of *Amyema* have been described since.

One of the main centers of diversity of *Amyema* is the Philippines where 22 described species can be found, of which 17 are endemic to the country (Danser 1935, Barlow 1974, 1984, 1992). Here, we describe a new species of *Amyema* from this archipelago. It was first photographed at Dicasalarin Cove in Baler, Aurora Province, in May 2011 during plant photography fieldwork for an online checklist of Philippine vascular plants: Co's Digital Flora of the Philippines (Pelser *et al*. 2011 onwards, Barcelona *et al*. in press). The aim of this fieldwork was to illustrate Philippine plant species with photographs that show their diagnostic characters and to make these freely available online for teaching, research, and conservation purposes. One of the advantages that plant photography offers is that it allows researchers as well as 'citizen scientists' to share such records of biodiversity with taxonomic specialists much easier than physical specimens. This approach has resulted in the discovery of several new species and new records for the Philippines (Barcelona *et al*. in press). The new *Amyema* described below is a good example of this, because upon completion of our fieldwork in 2011, when we shared our photos of this taxon with Daniel L. Nickrent (Southern Illinois University, Carbondale), he informed us that they represented a new species. We returned to Dicasalarin in March 2012 and April 2013 to collect herbarium specimens and to formally describe this taxon. Unfortunately, although both young and senescent flowers were observed, we were not able to find plants with fresh, open flowers during our three visits to Dicasalarin.

Taxonomy

Amyema nickrentii Barcelona & Pelser, *sp. nov.* (Figs 1, 2)

Type:—PHILIPPINES. Luzon: Aurora Prov., Baler Mun., Brgy. Zabali, Dicasalarin Cove, in coastal forest along road from Sitio

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