



Re-establishment of *Pithecellobium subglobosum* in Colombia and Venezuela (Leguminosae, Mimosoideae, tribe *Ingeae*)

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Abstract

Pithecellobium subglobosum is re-established as a species and *P. concinnum* and *P. larense* are referred to its synonymy. A critical analysis of type specimens of *Pithecellobium* section *Pithecellobium* from the Neotropic as well as many other herbarium collections shows that *P. subglobosum* is a morphologically distinct species related to *P. roseum*. *Pithecellobium subglobosum* is found in northeastern Colombia and northwestern Venezuela. An amended description, including information on pollen, foliar anatomy, ecology, distribution and conservation assessment are included.

Key words: Anatomy, Flora, IUCN, Neotropics, *Pithecellobium* alliance, pollen

Introduction

The tribe *Ingeae* Benth & Hooker (1865: 437) comprises 36 genera, and about one thousand species (Lewis & Rico Arce 2005). The *Ingeae* differ from other tribes of the subfamily because the stamens are not free but rather united into a tube of variable length. *Pithecellobium* Martius (1837: 114) is readily distinguished from other *Ingeae* genera because the funiculus of the seed is modified into a spongy aril that covers the lower one-third or one-half of the seed. At dehiscence, the seed is suspended on this red, pink or white aril that serves in attracting birds (Barneby & Grimes 1997).

Furthermore, with the exception of a single species, the genus is characterized by an armament of lignescent stipules. Barneby & Grimes (1997) published a monograph of the genus recognizing 17 species in tropical America. There, they referred all the species of the genus described by Pittier (1922, 1925, 1937) from the dry ecosystems of northern Colombia and Venezuela to the synonymy of *P. unguis-cati* (Linnaeus 1753: 517) Benth & Hooker (1844: 200) or *P. roseum* (Vahl 1807: 33) Barneby & Grimes (1997: 21). An exception was *P. glaucescens* Pittier (1925: 48) that was treated as a variety of *P. roseum*: *P. roseum* var. *glaucescens* (Pittier) Barneby & Grimes (1997: 22). This group of synonyms included: *Pithecellobium concinnum* Pittier (1925: 47), *P. guaricense* Pittier (1925: 51), *P. microchlamys* Pittier (1925: 51), *P. parviflorum* Pittier (1939: 305), *P. subglobosum* Pittier (1937: 82), *P. pulchellum* Pittier (1937: 82), and *P. zuliaense* Pittier (1925: 50). Nevertheless, Barneby & Grimes (1997) overlooked *P. concinnum* and *P. guaricense*, two taxa clearly belonging to section *Pithecellobium*. The first one, *P. concinnum*, is a small tree with bigeminate leaves and a capitate inflorescence that grows in the dry valleys of the west foothills of the Venezuelan's Andes. The second species, *P. guaricense*, is also a small tree with bigeminate leaves and a capitate inflorescence that grows in the dry plains south of the Venezuelan's coastal range, the Llanos. From a revision of several herbarium specimens it was noted that some individuals found along the northern Colombian-Venezuelan border identified as *P. unguis-cati* had a different appearance. The main objective of this article is to evaluate the taxonomic status of these specimens.