



Annotated checklist and identification keys of the Acalyphoideae (Euphorbiaceae) of Equatorial Guinea (Annobón, Bioko and Río Muni)

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Abstract

This study provides a checklist of the Acalyphoideae (Euphorbiaceae) present in Equatorial Guinea, comprised of 18 genera and 49 taxa. Identification keys have been added for genera and species of the subfamily. The best represented genus is *Macaranga* with ten species. Bibliographical references for Acalyphoideae (Euphorbiaceae) from Equatorial Guinea have been gathered and checked. Eight taxa are recorded for the first time from the country. One species is included based on literature records, because its distribution ranges suggest it may occur in Equatorial Guinea, and two introduced species could be naturalized.

Key words: biodiversity, flora, floristics, tropical Africa

Introduction

The Euphorbiaceae *sensu stricto* are one of the largest and most diverse plant families with over 246 genera and 6300 species. Additionally they are one of the most diversified angiosperm families. The circumscription and the systematic position of this family have been controversial (Webster 1994, Wurdack *et al.* 2005, Xi *et al.* 2012). Today Euphorbiaceae *s.str.* are subdivided into four subfamilies: Cheilosioideae, Acalyphoideae, Crotonoideae and Euphorbioideae (Radcliffe-Smith 2001, APG 2009). Acalyphoideae are the largest subfamily of Euphorbiaceae and have a pantropical distribution. No species are native to Europe. Africa does not appear to be the epicenter for acalyphoids. Divided into 14 tribes, 110 genera and about 1500 species, the best represented genera are *Acalypha* L. (\pm 430 ssp.), *Macaranga* Thouars (\pm 240 ssp.) and *Tragia* L. (\pm 170 ssp.) (Webster 1994, Radcliffe-Smith 2001, Stevens 2001 onwards, Takhtajan 2009), all of them with a large representation in Africa.

Equatorial Guinea is located in Western Central Africa. The insular region includes two islands in the Gulf of Guinea: Bioko (2017 km²), c. 32 km from the coast of Cameroon and Annobón (17 km²), c. 400 km from Gabon. The continental mainland, Río Muni (26000 km²), is located between 1°N and 2°N latitude. A compilation of data on location, phytogeography, climate and hydrogeography can be found in Guinea (1946), De Castro & De la Calle (1985), Pérez del Val (1993) or Heras *et al.* (2002). General information is also available online at <http://www.floradeguinea.com>.

Important floristic works on the Acalyphoideae of Central and West tropical Africa include those of Thiselton-Dyer (1912, 1913), Hutchinson & Dalziel (1928) and Keay (1958) and, more recently, of Akoègninou *et al.* (2006). Other relevant studies of nomenclature, conservation and floristics of neighbouring countries were also considered (Aké Assi 1963, Guinea 1968, Radcliffe-Smith 1987, Lebrun & Stork 2006). A complete account of the Acalyphoideae (Euphorbiaceae) of Equatorial Guinea has never been published. Although the subfamily was included in the general vascular plant catalogue of Guinea (1946), this author added plants that he presumed to be present in Equatorial Guinea.