



## A new species of *Malesherbia* (Passifloraceae Subfam. Malesherbioideae) from Peru

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### Abstract

*Malesherbia laraosensis* is described as a new species from the Department of Lima, Peru. The species is apparently narrowly endemic. The new species apparently belongs to *Malesherbia* sect. *Malesherbia* and is superficially similar to *M. splendens* and *M. scarlatiflora* in flower, but differs dramatically in habit—it is a very low-growing shrublet with branches ca. 15 cm tall, versus tall shrubs 1 m tall in the other two species. It is also characterized by obovate, dark green, adaxially subglabrous leaves (versus narrowly ovate-acuminate, densely pubescent and glandular in the other species). The new species brings the species total for Peruvian *Malesherbia* to 10.

**Key words:** Lima, Laraos, Andean, endemic

### Introducción

Ruiz & Pavón (1798:79) created the genus *Malesherbia* and named it after Lamoignon de Malesherbes, patron of the botanists in those times (Ricardi 1967). The genus is the only member of subfamily Malesherbioideae (Passifloraceae) (APGIII, 2009) and is endemic to southwestern South America. The most recent revision was published by Ricardi (1967), who recognized and illustrated a total of 27 species and 9 varieties, most of them from Chile. Since then, only a single new species has been described, from Chile (Muñoz-Schick & Pinto, 2003). Gengler & Crawford (2000) performed a study of the genetic diversity of four central Peruvian species and found very low indices of genetic diversity in the populations. Later, Gengler (2002) recognized only 24 species in the genus and hypothesized a late Miocene or early Pliocene origin for the genus. Gengler (2003) provided a morphological and molecular analysis of the genus, and subdivided it into five sections, a subdivision taken up by Kubitzki (2007). Currently, a total of 9 species are recognized for Peru, all of which are endemic. León (2006) categorized the Peruvian species according to their conservation status; according to the IUCN (2001) criteria seven species have to be considered as Endangered (EN) and two as Vulnerable (VU). None of the species are found in any of the Protected Areas.

*Malesherbia* is distributed in the central and southern Andes in Peru, Chile and Argentina, mostly in the lower parts of the western slopes on rocky and sandy soils, in arid and semi-arid habitats. In Peru the northern distribution limit is the Río Huaura valley in the Department of Lima. All species are found in Andean scrub communities or in the desert region at 100–3550 m asl., with the only exception of *Malesherbia arequipensis* Ricardi (1961: 5), which is also found in the Loma vegetation of southern Peru. Most species are narrowly endemic to small areas.

While, revising the herbarium specimens of *Malesherbia* in the Herbario San Marcos (USM), the new species here described was encountered amongst the unidentified specimens. This brings the total species number to 10 for Peru.

### Material and methods

In May 2010 one of us (HB) had the opportunity to visit the locality from where the specimen came and encountered the new species in the field. Herbarium specimens were prepared following the standard techniques (Cerrate 1969, Lot & Chiang 1986); additionally, leaves and flowers were preserved in AFA (Alcohol, formaldehyde, acetic acid) for morphological analysis. The description follows the terminology of Lindley (1951).

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