



## *Senecio eliseae* (Compositae, Senecioneae), a new species from the southern Ecuadorian Andes

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### Abstract

*Senecio eliseae* is described as a new species from the southern Ecuadorian Andes. It is a suffrutescent herb characterized by erect branches that are leaved only in the upper half, yellow discoid nodding capitula, and glandular-hirsute indumentum on the stem, leaves, and synflorescence. Detailed photographs of plants from the type locality are provided.

### Resumen

*Senecio eliseae* se describe como una nueva especie del sur de los Andes Ecuatorianos. Es un sufrútice que se caracteriza por sus ramas erectas con hojas solo en la mitad superior, capítulos discoideos, nutantes y amarillos, y por el indumento glanduloso-hirsuto de sus tallos, hojas y sinflorescencia. Se aportan fotografías detalladas tomadas en la localidad tipo.

**Key words:** Asteraceae, Ecuador, paramos

### Introduction

The genus *Senecio* Linnaeus (1753: 866) (Compositae, Senecioneae) is one of the largest genera of flowering plants and the largest genus in the tribe Senecioneae (Nordenstam *et al.* 2009). It comprises ca. 1250 species (Bremer 1994, Pelsler *et al.* 2007, Nordenstam 2007). In South America there are around 500 species (Vision & Dillon 1996), and ca. 67 species grow in the paramos of Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Peru (Dillon 2005). Along with *Pentacalia* Cassini (1827: 461) and *Gynoxys* Cassini (1827: 455), *Senecio* is one of the most diverse genera of the tribe Senecioneae occurring in the paramos (Dillon 2005). Although valuable contributions on the group are available (Kunth in Humboldt *et al.* 1818, Weddell 1856, Hieronymus 1900, Benoist 1936, Cuatrecasas 1950, 1951, Sklenář 2001, 2012), the taxonomy of the *Senecio* species from the paramo remains poorly known.

According to the new delimitation of *Senecio* proposed by Pelsler *et al.* (2007), the species belonging to the Andean genera *Aetheolaena* Cassini (1827: 453), *Culcitium* Bonpland in Humboldt & Bonpland (1808: 1), and *Lasiocephalus* Willdenow ex Schlechtendal (1818: 308) should be transferred to or reinstated in *Senecio*. Because of these transfers, the estimated number of native *Senecio* species in the Ecuadorian Andes is 27, thus, substantially increasing the number of species recorded by Nordenstam (1999: 308). These species are perennial herbs adapted to high mountain conditions, suffrutescent herbs or scandent subshrubs. Their capitula are usually discoid, although species with radiate capitula are also found. The style branches are truncate with apical sweeping hairs or penicillate. The morphology of the style branches, among other characters, was traditionally used to distinguish *Senecio* s.str., with truncate style branches, from *Lasiocephalus* (including *Aetheolaena*), which displays penicillate style branches (Cuatrecasas 1978, Robinson & Funk 1997, Silva-Moure *et al.* 2013). Further studies on the taxonomic value of this character are needed in order to unequivocally settle that *Lasiocephalus* species are best subsumed in *Senecio*. Moreover, a molecular study including more species of the segregate genera is required to firmly establish the phylogenetic relationships between these groups.