



Justicia paracambi, a new Brazilian species of Acanthaceae

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Abstract

Justicia paracambi is described as a new, so far strictly endemic species to the state of Rio de Janeiro, which occurs in an area of natural forest in the Parque Natural Municipal do Curió, in the city of Paracambi. It differs from other *Justicia* L. species by the presence of dense glandular and non-glandular trichomes on the rachis, on the bracts and bracteoles and on the calyx, the terminal, lax panicle of spikes with decussate branches and flowers, the calyx 5-lobed, the white to greenish corolla and by the anthers with the lower thecae with a remarkable basal appendage. According to its restricted area of occurrence and the approximate number of individuals, it is considered critically endangered. The new species is described and illustrated and comments on its occurrence, phenology, taxonomy and diagnostic characters are provided.

Keywords: Atlantic forest; Rio de Janeiro State; endemism; morphology; taxonomy

Resumo

Justicia paracambi é descrita como uma nova espécie para o Estado do Rio de Janeiro, conhecida até o momento como estritamente endêmica, ocorrendo em uma área de floresta natural no Parque Natural Municipal do Curió, no Município de Paracambi. Difere de outras espécies de *Justicia* L., especialmente, pela presença de tricomas glandulares e não glandulares densos na raque, nas brácteas e bractéolas e no cálice, pela panícula de espigas terminal, laxa e com ramos e flores decussados, pelo cálice 5-lobado, pela corola branca a esverdeada e pelas anteras com a teca inferior com um apêndice basal destacado. De acordo com a sua área restrita de ocorrência e o número aproximado de indivíduos, é considerada criticamente ameaçada. A nova espécie é descrita e ilustrada e comentários sobre a sua ocorrência, fenologia, taxonomia e caracteres diagnósticos são fornecidos.

Palavras-chave: Floresta Atlântica; Estado do Rio de Janeiro; endemismo; morfologia; taxonomia

Introduction

The species described here was collected in relict natural tropical rain forest in the southern Brazilian state of Rio de Janeiro. This area is protected, being part of the *Parque Natural Municipal do Curió* (Municipal Natural Park of Curió), which is mainly occupied by a rich forest with most of it in an excellent state of conservation (Fraga *et al.* 2012, Cysneiros *et al.* 2015). It forms part of a forest continuum between the *Reserva Biológica do Tinguá* (Tinguá Biological Reserve), in the northeast, and the *Parque Estadual Cunhambebe* (Cunhambebe State Park) in the southeast of the State. These forests make up the Serra do Mar Atlantic Forest biodiversity corridor, joining the montane forests of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo States (Tabarelli *et al.* 2005). Fraga *et al.* (2012) pointed out the importance of Acanthaceae in the understory of the forest in the Curió Park.

The genus *Justicia* L. (Linnaeus 1753: 15) is the most complex and numerous among the Acanthaceae and consists of 600 species distributed throughout the whole world (Ezcurra 2002), with 128 in Brazil (Profice *et al.* 2015), 34 in the Atlantic Forest (Stehmann *et al.* 2009) and 26 in Rio de Janeiro State (Baumgratz *et al.* 2013). McDade *et al.* (2008) have already pointed to the discovery of many new species of the tribe Justiceae Bremekamp (Bremekamp 1965: 29) in the Neotropics, including *Justicia*. In recent times, studying the flora of Bolivia, Wasshausen & Wood (2003) reported no less than 21 new species for this genus; and just for the Semi-arid region of the State of Bahia,