



A new species of *Euphorbia* (Euphorbiaceae) from Guangxi, China

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Abstract

A new species of *Euphorbia*, *Euphorbia maoershanensis*, is described and illustrated according to specimens collected from Mt. Mao-er-shan, Xing'an County, Guangxi, China. The new species is a narrow endemic, known only from a single mountaintop in Mao-er-shan, and is of urgent conservation concern.

Introduction

Since the 1970s, local botanists have noticed that a number of unusual specimens in the herbarium IBK that had been collected since the 1930s were different from other species in Guangxi, China. These specimens have since been recorded as *Euphorbia* sp. in local botanical literatures (Li 2001). In early 2000, two sheets of *Euphorbia* Linnaeus (1753: 450) from PE and K that were collected from the same location in Xing'an County, Guangxi, China, came to the first author's (JSM) attention during his taxonomic studies for the *Flora of China* (Ma & Gilbert 2008). However, no further specimens came to our attention until October 2009 when the herbarium IBK of Guangxi, China was visited, where more than a dozen collections from the same location in Xing'an County, Guangxi, were deposited without species identification. After careful examination of these collections, especially of characters of flowers and fruits, followed by subsequent field observation of flowers, fruits and seeds the next year, it became obvious that these collections indeed represent a new species of *Euphorbia* subg. *Esula* Persoon (1806: 14) sect. *Holophyllum* (Prokhanov 1933: 68) Prokhanov (1949: 258), which we described here.

Euphorbia maoershanensis F. N. Wei & J. S. Ma, *sp. nov.* (Figs. 1 & 2)

The new species is similar to other members of sect. *Holophyllum*, but has leaves with a comparatively long petiole, which is a very rare case at least among species of *Euphorbia* from East Asia; and it is also similar to *Euphorbia soongarica* Boissier (1860: 32) but different from the latter by fruits that are smooth, leaves with entire margin and revolute when dried, and the caruncle of seeds not stipitate.

Type:—CHINA. Guangxi: Xing'an County, Mao-er-shan (Mt. Cat Ear), Natural Reserve, top of mountain, 2080 m, 23 June 1997, Li Guang-Zhao 15042 (holotype PE!).

Herb, perennial, smooth and glabrous. Root terete, 30–50 cm × 5–10 mm. Stems erect, several clustered, 30–50 cm × 4–8 mm, with several branches in the upper part. Stem leaves alternate; petiole c. 5–7 mm long; leaf blade ovate-elliptic, 4–6 × 0.3–0.8 cm, apex acuminate or acute, base attenuate, margin entire, light blue-green at maturity, and slightly revolute when dried; lateral veins pinnate, 5–8 pairs; primary involucral-leaves