



A New Species of *Pleurostachys* (Cyperaceae) from Atlantic coastal Brazil

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Abstract

Pleurostachys arcuata is described as a new species endemic to the Atlantic forest of Brazil. It is illustrated and is compared to other species of *Pleurostachys*. It has the large achenes of *P. macrantha* but has small, axillary synflorescences similar to those of *P. gaudichaudii*.

Resumo

Pleurostachys arcuata é descrita como uma espécie nova da Mata Atlântica do Brasil. Está ilustrada e comparada com outras espécies de *Pleurostachys*. Tem os aquênios grandes de *P. macrantha* mas as sinflorescências pequenas e axilares semelhantes às de *P. gaudichaudii*.

Key words: *Pleurostachys*, Cyperaceae, Brazil, Atlantic forest, taxonomy

Introduction

Pleurostachys Brongn. is a small genus found exclusively in neotropical forests. Kükenthal's monograph of 1952 treated 30 species. Thomas and Alves (2008) recognized 23 species, 21 of which are endemic to Brazil's Atlantic coastal forest. Modern collections have greatly increased the number of specimens available for study, revealing several undescribed species, one of which is described here.

Most authors have maintained *Pleurostachys* as a separate genus closely allied to *Rhynchospora* Vahl (Boeckler, 1875; Clarke, 1908; Pfeiffer, 1925; Koyama, 1961; Kükenthal, 1952; Eiten, 1976; Bruhl, 1995; Goetghebeur, 1986, 1998; Soros & Bruhl, 2000). Recent molecular studies (Thomas *et al.* 2009a) confirm this relationship and raise the question as to whether or not *Rhynchospora* is paraphyletic with respect to *Pleurostachys*. Because the phylogenetic relationship of *Pleurostachys* and *Rhynchospora* is still unclear, and because they are morphologically distinct, we are describing this new species as a member of the genus *Pleurostachys*.

Features that unite *Rhynchospora* and *Pleurostachys* in the tribe Rhynchosporeae include simple spikelets, bisexual flowers, lenticular achenes subtended by perianth bristles, and a persistent style base. Characters that distinguish *Pleurostachys* from *Rhynchospora* include an inflorescence comprising a series of axillary synflorescences, distichously (or subdistichously) arranged spikelet scales, distally plumose perianth bristles, and decurrent style bases (these are discussed at length in Thomas & Alves, 2008).