



Securidaca marajoara (Polygalaceae), a new species from the Brazilian Amazon¹

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Abstract

A new species of the Polygalaceae from the Brazilian eastern Amazon, *Securidaca marajoara*, is described and illustrated herein. The species is morphologically similar to *S. bialata* but distinct on the large, conspicuous bracts persistent at flower anthesis, long inflorescences, ovate to elliptic leaves and short internodes.

Key words: Brazil, Pará, Marajó Island, Fabales

Introduction

The Polygalaceae is a widely distributed family throughout the world, except for New Zealand and the poles (Eriksen & Persson 2007). The family comprises 26 genera and about 1.300 species, out of which 11 genera and 188 species are found in Brazil (Marques & Peixoto 2007; Pastore 2012; Pastore *et al.* 2010, 2013; Pastore *pers. comm.* 2013). *Securidaca* Linnaeus (1753: 707) is a pantropical genus with about 80 species mainly distributed in the neotropics. Most of its species are lianas, rarely shrubs and small trees, and are characterized by having papilionaceous flowers, pseudomonomerous gynoeceum bearing a single ovule, samaroid fruits and seeds without endosperm (Marques 1996, Eriksen & Persson 2007).

In Brazil, 25 species and two varieties of *Securidaca* are found, out of which 14 are endemic (Marques 1996). That encompasses about one third of the genus' diversity (Pastore *et al.* 2013). Brazilian species of *Securidaca* are found mainly in forests, but some occur in savannas, caatingas, rocky outcrops and coastal vegetation (Marques, 1996). Many of the genus' species have been the target of several taxonomic studies (e.g., Bennett 1874; Marques 1996; Pastore & Cavalcanti 2006; Lüdtkke *et al.* 2008), but uncertainties on their identification still remain, mostly due to a considerable polymorphism in both vegetative and reproductive characters, and to scarcity of fruiting specimens in herbarium collections. So far, the genus has never been monographed, although many authors have emphasized the need for such a taxonomic review (Eriksen *et al.* 2000; Aymard *et al.* 2004; Eriksen & Persson 2007; Aymard & Campbell 2007).

During a floristic survey on the Polygalaceae at Marajós Island, northern Brazil, we discovered a voucher specimen deposited at MG Brazilian herbarium (*Silva et al.* 4279) that is unambiguously ascribed to *Securidaca*. However, this specimen showed morphological characters that did not allow identifying it as any known species of the genus. We examined collections of *Securidaca* from IAN, INPA, MG, R, RB and UEC