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A new ornithophilous yellow-flowered *Vriesea* (Bromeliaceae) from Serra do Caraça, Minas Gerais, Brazil

LEONARDO M. VERSIEUX¹ & TALITA MOTA MACHADO²

¹Departamento de Botânica, Ecologia e Zoologia, Centro de Biociências, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, 59078-900, Natal, Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil. E-mail: lversieux@yahoo.com.br

²Departamento de Botânica, Instituto de Ciências Biológicas, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Caixa Postal 486, 31270-901, Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil. E-mail: litamota@yahoo.com.br

Abstract

Vriesea marceloi is described as a new species and is illustrated. It is compared with *V. claudiana*, *V. clauseniana* and *V. stricta*, which we assume are the morphologically most similar species. The new species is related to the “*V. minarum* complex”, which groups yellow-flowered rupicolous taxa occurring on isolated mountain tops in southeastern Brazil, as well as to *V. clauseniana*, which shares the habitat with the new taxon. Pictures of the plants in the habitat, photos of the holotype, and a morphological comparative table are provided.

Key words: endemism, Espinhaço range, Iron Quadrangle, lithophytes, Poales, Tillandsioideae, *Vrieseae*

Introduction

Vriesea Lindley (1843: 29). is the largest genus of Bromeliaceae in Brazil, totaling 207 species of which 197 (ca. 95%) are endemic to this country (Forzza *et al.* 2012). This richness is demonstrated in several floristic inventories carried out in Brazilian parks and also along different states where *Vriesea* usually is the most representative bromeliad genus (Versieux & Wendt 2007, Costa *et al.* 2009, Costa & Wendt 2010, Coser *et al.* 2010, Machado & Menini-Neto 2010, Marques *et al.* 2012).

One important area for *Vriesea* species diversification is the Espinhaço mountain range, between the states of Bahia and Minas Gerais (Versieux 2008, Versieux *et al.* 2008). Several *Vriesea* species or groups of species are mesophytic and characteristic of the eastern Brazilian Atlantic Rainforest (e.g. Gomes-da-Silva & Costa 2011). However some of them may reach the Espinhaço range, having their westernmost inland distributional limit along this mountain chain. Possibly, species that grow along the Espinhaço mountain range are derived from ancestors occurring within the Atlantic Rainforest (Versieux & Wendt 2007, Versieux *et al.* 2012). Along this mountainous region, the genus *Vriesea* benefits from its ability to grow either inside forested areas along valleys as epiphyte or terrestrial, or also on open and exposed habitats as the rocky outcrops (Versieux 2008).

The Serra do Caraça is situated in the southern portion of the Espinhaço range, in an area known as Iron Quadrangle, and it is a private reserve (ca. 11,000 hectares) and Catholic Sanctuary (Vasconcelos 2000). The vegetation of this area is extremely rich and encompasses semideciduous seasonal forests, open areas of savanna and grasslands on rocky soils, as well as high elevation fields and isolated forest patches occurring along the higher and more humid areas (Vasconcelos 2000, Spósito & Stehmann 2006). The Bromeliaceae are well represented along the Serra do Caraça, totaling 14 genera and 36 species including several endemics (Versieux *et al.* 2004, present work). In a recent phytogeographical analysis, the bromeliad flora from Serra do Caraça clustered with a neighboring mountainous area, namely the Serra do Cipó, showing ~26% of similarity (Versieux *et al.* 2010).