



Phanerosorus (Matoniaceae), a new fern genus record for the Philippines

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The fern family Matoniaceae C. Presl (1847: 32) is a small group composed of only two genera, *Matonia* R. Brown in Wallich (1829: 16) and *Phanerosorus* Copeland (1909: 344) with three or four species characterized by rhizomes with polycyclic solenosteles covered with thick uniseriate hairs, anastomosing veins in fertile parts of the lamina, peltate and fugacious indusia, relatively large sporangia and gametangia, and tetrahedral, trilete spores (Kramer 1990, Kato & Setoguchi 1998). The two genera differ from each other in leaf architecture (pedate in *Matonia* and pinnate in *Phanerosorus*), habit, and habitat preferences (*Phanerosorus* pendent and obligately calcicolous and *Matonia* erect and preferring exposed, sometimes mineralized ridges of high mountains; Kato & Iwatsuki 1985, Barcelona *et al.* 1996).

Phanerosorus was described by Copeland based mainly on specimens collected by Foxworthy from the type locality of the species. These specimens were formerly placed by Baker in *Matonia* as *M. sarmentosa* Baker (1887: 256). Two species with indeterminate fronds with pinnae exhibiting sympodial branching and adventitious buds at the base are currently recognized for this genus. The type species, *P. sarmentosus* (Baker) Copeland (1909: 344), is known only from Sarawak in Borneo, whereas *P. major* Diels (1932: 311) is more widespread having been reported from several smaller islands off western New Guinea and in Seram (= Ceram), Southern Moluccas, East Indonesia (Kato & Iwatsuki 1985).

In March 2011, during fieldwork in Basey, the first author visited the Sohoton Natural Bridge National Park, a very popular tourist attraction in the Municipality Basey, Western Samar Prov. (Fig. 1A). This area forms a part of the more encompassing Samar Island Natural Park (SINP). An unknown, pendent fern (Fig. 1B–F) was found tucked in a crevice of a limestone cliff at the banks of Cadac-an River (“Golden River”) in the vicinity of *loco dicto* Panhulugan Caves (part of the Sohoton Cave complex). It was growing with other calcicolous ferns namely, *Cyclopeltis* J. Smith (1846: 36) sp., *Pyrrosia splendens* (C. Presl) Ching (1935: 68), *P. nummularifolia* (Swartz) Ching (1935: 52), and *Pteris vitatta* Linnaeus (1753: 1074), among others. The site was very accessible to tourists visiting the area and, in fact, in February 2010, a little more than a year before us, Mr. Wally Suarez took perhaps the first photographs of the very same plant. Suarez brought these photos to our attention in 2012 when he contributed them to the PhytoImages website (Nickrent *et al.* 2006 onwards; DOL41716) as part of the Co’s Digital Flora of the Philippines project (Pelser *et al.* 2011 onwards). This is the first report of the occurrence of the genus *Phanerosorus*, *P. major*, in the Philippines, representing the western- and northernmost extension of the range of this species at an elevation of less than 100 m. In other parts of its distribution area it has been reported between sea level and 600 m in elevation (Kato 1998).

On November 8, 2013, Basey, together with the city of Tacloban and other parts of the islands of Leyte and Samar, was devastated by the strongest typhoon (*Yolanda*, international code name *Haiyan*) recorded to ever have a landfall. It has been reported that the forests have been quite badly damaged as well as the villages along the banks of Cadac-an River where *P. major* was found. Only a visit to the area in the future will enable us to find out if the plants were spared and if there are other populations of the species in the area. Unfortunately, because we did not see additional plants at that time, we did not collect an entire specimen and only collected a small fertile frond of less than 15 cm long with fertile segments a little more than 1mm wide, attached to a creeping rhizome (Barcelona 3740, PNH).

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