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A new species of *Colubrina* (Rhamnaceae) of the Amazon region of Ecuador

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Abstract

A new species of *Colubrina* from the Amazon region of Ecuador is described and illustrated. The species is characterized by its elliptical and distichously arranged leaves, 10–18 × 4–8 cm, and the presence of basal, concave elliptical, glands, the short-shoots of the inflorescence with few nodes and seeds with two inner sides flat-concave and third side, as wide as the previous two and convex. The new species has been widely collected in areas below 700 m, and is expected to occur in similar habitats in the border areas of Colombia and Peru.

Key words: *Colubrina*, amazonica, concave glands, Ecuador

Introduction

Colubrina Richard ex Brongniart (1826: 61) in the family Rhamnaceae includes 32 species. Species of this genus are distinguished by simple, alternate, distichously arranged leaves, with two glands at the base of the leaves or glands rarely scattered on the abaxial surface. Their inflorescence are arranged in fascicles or a cyme with bisexual flowers, and with a cup-shaped floral tube, with 5 stamens clasped by the petals; a discoid nectary disc fused to the floral tube. The fruits of *Colubrina* are dry, and fragment into three dehiscent cocci at maturity.

Colubrina includes 32 species occurring in tropical America, Asia, the Pacific and Madagascar (Johnston 1971, Wendt 1983, Pennington et al 2004), with two species in Peru (Pennington et al 2004): *C. glandulosa* Perkins (1911: 465) and *C. retusa* (Pittier 1937: 428) R.S. Cowan (1952: 405). For Ecuador, Liesner (1999) has reported three species: *C. arborescens* (Miller 1768) Sargent (1913: 167), *C. elliptica* (Swartz 1788: 50) Brizicky & W.L. Stern (1958: 95) and *C. spinosa* Donn. Smith (1897: 4). For over 25 years, many collections of *Colubrina* have been made in the Amazon region of Ecuador. Some of these specimens were initially determined as *C. arborescens, C. elliptica and C. spinosa*. However, after a thorough study of the collections deposited at the herbaria QCNE and QCA in Ecuador, and a careful analysis of images of type specimens available from the database of Global Plant Initiative web site, specialized literature, and consultation with colleagues, it was concluded that such specimens were wrongly identified and corresponded to an undescribed species described below.

Colubrina amazonica W. Palacios, *sp. nov*. (Fig. 1)

The new species is similar to *C. spinosa*, but differs in its leaves which have 5–8 pairs of lateral veins and the basal concave glands elliptical, usually with the longer outer edge tangential to the leaf margin, the fascicle of sessile short-shoots with few nodes covered by overlapping bracteoles, together usually forming a globose mound and the individual short-shots not easily discernable.

Type:—ECUADOR, Sucumbíos: Quebrada Güepicillo, cuenca del Río Güepí, esquina noreste de Ecuador, Inventario Rápido, campamento 3, 00°10.38'W, 75°40.33'S, 220–276 m elev., October 2007, *W. Palacios*, *N. Dávila*, *R. Foster*, *B. Alverson*, *C. Vriesendorp*, *J. López*, *L. C. Lucitante* & *S. Descante 16111* (holotype 209784 QCNE!, isotype F!).

Tree to 15 m tall. Young branches with elongated lenticels. Leaves simple, alternate, 10–18 × 4–8 cm, elliptical, less frequent oblong or obovate, membranaceous, glabrous or rarely with scattered hairs on the median nerve on the abaxial surface, 5–8 pairs of lateral veins, and two glands in the outer margin of the base of the blade on the abaxial