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Philodendron pusillum (Araceae), a remarkable new species from Colombia

Abstract

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Philodendron pusillum from lowland Colombia, a small terrestrial herb inhabiting the forest floor, is described as a species new to science and compared with the similar *P. humile* from Brazil. It can be placed into *P. subg. Philodendron* but its sectional position is still uncertain.

The neotropical genus *Philodendron* is very variable, comprising woody shrubs to herbaceous climbers. It is divided into three subgenera, and the largest, *P. subg. Philodendron*, to which our new species belongs, is again divided into several sections (Croat 1997). Recently one of the smallest species, *P. humile* E. G. Gonç., was recognized among species previously described in the genus *Homalomena* (Gonçalves 2003), but its sectional position could not be determined with certainty. During a visit of the first author to the Munich Botanical Garden in spring 2002, we recognized an undetermined plant from Colombia as an undescribed *Philodendron* species close to but clearly distinct from the Brazilian *P. humile*. We describe it here as new.

***Philodendron pusillum* E. G. Gonç. & Bogner, sp. nova** – Fig. 1-2

Holotypus: Colombia, Amazonas, Rio Caquetá, La Pedrera, 240 m, 1.-4.10.1952, *H. Garcia-Barriga 14610* (COL).

Herba diminuta; caudex repens, 4-6 mm in diam., cataphylla persistentes; petiolus 7-11.5 × 0.15-0.2 cm, rubicundus; lamina elliptico-oblonga vel lanceolata, 13-20 × 2.4-4.5 cm; nervi primarii laterales utroque 4-5; pedunculus 7-8.5 × 0.2-0.3 cm; spatha viridis, 4.5-4.8 cm longa; spadix 3.5-4 cm longa.

Small terrestrial herb, 30-35 cm tall. *Stem* rhizomatous, creeping, 1-4 cm long, 0.4-0.6 cm in diam. *Roots* stiff, 1.2-1.5 mm in diam., numerous in the lower portion of the stem and appearing at the nodes. *Leaves* 4-7 per plant, restricted to the shoot apex; cataphylls persistent, membranaceous, 7-7.5 × 0.4-0.8 cm. *Petiole* 7-11.5 cm long, 0.15-0.2 cm in diam., reddish, sheath short.

Leaf blade elliptic-oblong to lanceolate, membranaceous, 13-20 × 2.4-4.5 cm, acute to cuneate at



Fig. 1. *Philodendron pusillum* – holotype specimen at COL. – Photograph by F. Höck.
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Fig. 2. Holotype of *Philodendron pusillum*, close up showing the opened spathe with the spadix and the venation of the leaf blades. – Scale bar = 2 cm; photograph by F. Höck.
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base and acuminate at apex, venation parallel-pinnate, with 4-5 primary lateral veins on each side of a well developed midrib, arising at an angle of 20-30°, 3-6 thinner secondary veins, situated between the primaries, and still much finer veins situated between the secondaries. *Inflorescence* solitary; peduncle 7-8.5 cm long, 0.2-0.3 cm in diam. *Spathe* 4.5-4.8 cm long, 0.8-1 cm in diam., green, hardly constricted (becoming narrower in upper half), apex acute. *Spadix* 3.5-4 cm long, stipitate, stipe 5-6 mm long, c. 1.8 mm in diam.; *female part* slightly conical, 7-9 mm long, proximally 3.5-4 mm in diam., distally 2.5-3 mm in diam.; *sterile part* c. 3 mm long, 3-3.5 mm in diam.; *male part* cylindrical, 23-25 mm long, 4-4.5 mm in diam., apex blunt. *Gynoeceum* c. 1.5 mm long, 0.9-1 mm in diam.; stigma 0.7-0.8 mm in diam.; ovary with few locules and 4-7(?) ovules in each locule. *Staminodes* obpyramidal, c. 1.5 mm long. *Male flowers* usually two- to three-androus, apical and basal male flowers with only one stamen; stamens subprismatic, c. 1.5 mm long, c. 1 mm wide. *Fruits* unknown.

Distribution. – *Philodendron pusillum* is known only from the type locality.

Relationships. – *Philodendron pusillum* is easily recognized by its delicate habit (usually the whole plant is not more than 30-35 cm tall) with elliptic-oblong to lanceolate leaf blades. It is a terrestrial species with slender petioles that are reddish according to the collector. The most similar species seems to be *P. humile* from Brazilian Amazonia (Gonçalves 2003). However, the base of the leaf blade in *P. pusillum* is acute to cuneate, whereas truncate to subcordate in *P. humile*. Another difference is the number of primary lateral veins (4-5 in *P. pusillum* versus 5-7 in *P. humile*) and the angle at which they arise from the midrib (20-30° in *P. pusillum* versus 40-45° in *P. humile*). As with *P. humile*, the sectional position of *P. pusillum* is uncertain.

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