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Authors: Palmarola-Bejerano, Alejandro, Romanov, Mikhail S., and Bobrov, Alexey V. F. C.

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Novitiae florae cubensis No. 29

ALEJANDRO PALMAROLA-BEJERANO, MIKHAIL S. ROMANOV & ALEXEY V. F. C. BOBROV

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Abstract

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Magnolia virginiana was reported recently from the Majaguillar marshes in western Cuba. This was the first Cuban record of the species, formerly considered an endemic of the USA. The Majaguillar population of *M. virginiana* differs in leaf shape and flower features from those of the North American mainland. It is therefore described as a new subspecies, *M. virginiana* subsp. *oviedoae*.

Additional key words: Antilles, *Magnolia virginiana* subsp. *oviedoae,* taxonomy

The number of *Magnolia* taxa known from Cuba rose from the single first described *Magnolia cubensis* Urb. (León & Alain 1951) to 3 species and 8 subspecies in the latest treatment of Cuban magnolias (Imchanitzkaja 1991): *M. cubensis* with subsp. c*ubensis*, subsp. *turquinensis* Imkhan. and subsp. *acunae* Imkhan. (Imchanitzkaja 1974), *M. cristalensis* Bisse with subsp. *cristalensis,* subsp. *moana* Imkhan. and subsp. *baracoana* Imkhan., and *M. cacuminicola* Bisse with subsp. *cacuminicola* and subsp. *bissei* Imkhan. All except *M. cubensis* subsp. *acunae,* endemic to the Guamuhaya massif in C Cuba, are restricted to the mountains of E Cuba. Bisse (1974) had four species instead of the current three, but he later (Bisse 1988) acknowledged that his *M. leonis* "Tujanitskaya" (an error for Imchanitzkaja) was the same as *M. cubensis* subsp. *acunae*.

Oviedo & al. (2008) published the first record of a native *Magnolia* for W Cuba: *M. virginiana* L. They had discovered this species, formerly considered an endemic of the USA (Treseder 1978; Calaway 1994; Meyer 1997), in the Majaguillar marshes in the municipality of Martí, province of Matanzas.

Fig. 1. Holotype specimen of *Magnolia virginiana* subsp. *oviedoae* (HAJB).

Fig. 2. *Magnolia virginiana* subsp. *oviedoae* – A: flower; B: fruit. – Photographs by L. R. González-Torres.

Upon closer study we now propose recognition of the Cuban population of *Magnolia virginiana* as a new subspecies, morphologically distinct from both North American subspecies, *M. virginiana* subsp. *virginiana* and subsp. *australis* (Sarg.) A. E. Murray.

Magnolia virginiana subsp. ***oviedoae*** A. Palmarola, M. S. Romanov & A. V. Bobrov, **subsp. nov.** Holotype: Cuba, Prov. Matanzas, Municipio Martí, Ciénaga de Majaguillar, camino de la Alameda a la Ciénaga de Gonzalito, 8.10.2006. *Oviedo, Palmarola & González-Torres HFC 84055* (HAJB; isotypes: B, HAJB, JE; other isotypes [same taxon, same locality, same date, same collectors] under the numbers *HFC 84056*: B, HAJB, JE; *84057*: B, HAJB; *84058*: HAJB; *84059*: B, HAJB). – Fig. 1.

Frutex sempervirens paluster, ad 7 m altus, truncis pluribus; ramuli hornotini et pagina inferior foliorum pilis argenteis deciduis ± sparsis obtecta; foliorum lamina anguste elliptica vel lanceolata, 7.5-17 × 2.3-5 cm, basi cuneata, apice acutata; flores parvuli, sepalis subloriformibus, petalis auguste obovatis; gynoeceum et fructus anguste cylindracei.

Evergreen many-stemmed shrub about 4-7 m high, with a crown diameter of up to 10 m. Young branches and underside of leaves covered with ± sparse silvery hairs, usually persisting for a short time on fully grown branches and sometimes for nearly one year on the shoots. *Leaf blade* lanceolate or narrowly elliptic, 7.5-17 × 2.3-5 cm, medium green above, glaucous beneath; base narrowly cuneate, apex narrowly acute. *Flower buds* protected by pubescent bud scales. *Flowers* (Fig. 2A) smallish, with 3 almost ribbon-shaped, greenish white sepals with a rounded tip and 7-8(-9) narrowly obovate petals; stamens numerous, flattened, acute, pollen pale or whitish; gynoecium and fruit (a polyfollicle: Fig. 2B) narrowly ellipsoidal or cylindrical.

Both *Magnolia virginiana* subsp. *virginiana* and subsp. *australis* have broader, elliptic leaves with a more broadly cuneate base and cuneate acute tip, larger flowers with wider sepals and petals, and a broader spheroid-cylindrical or ellipsoidal gynoecium and fruit. The former, which is

Fig. 3. Distribution of *Magnolia virginiana* subsp. *oviedoae*.

also a shrub, has deciduous leaves. The latter always grows as a single-stemmed tree in waterlogged areas (only on poor, thin soils it may occasionally develop additional stems as a result of damage), and the silvery pubescence of the branches and leaf underside is denser, persisting during one or more seasons.

Eponymy. – The new subspecies is named after the Cuban botanist Ramona Oviedo Prieto, curator of the herbarium HAC, who discovered this population.

Distribution. – Only known from the type locality (Fig. 3).

Habitat. – The plants grow in small mounds within the swamp grassland and in the ecotone areas between swamp grassland and swamp forest.

Other specimens seen. – Cuba, Prov. Matanzas, Municipio Martí, Ciénaga de Majaguillar, Ciénaga de Gonzalito, 19.2.2006, *Oviedo, Blanco & Muñoz SV 42997* (HAC, HAJB); ibid., al NO de Martí, Ciénaga de Gonzalito cerca del Canal de Blanquizal, bosque secundario de ciénaga, alt. 5 m, 10.-11.2.2007, *Palmarola, González-Torres & Cruz HFC 84667, 84668, 84669, 84670, 84672* (HAJB), *84671, 84674* (B, HAJB), *84673* (B, HAJB, JE); ibid., 22°59'45"N, 80°58'45"W, bosque secundario de ciénaga, flores color crema, 27.2.2007, *Greuter, Palmarola & Rankin 26651* (B, HAJB, JE, PAL-Gr); ibid., Ciénaga de Gonzalito, 21.3.2007, *Palmarola, Romanov, Bobrov & Pérez-Montesino HFC 84633* (HAJB).

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Addresses of the authors:

Alejandro Palmarola-Bejerano, Jardín Botánico Nacional, Universidad de La Habana, Carretera "El Rocío", km 3½, Calabazar, Boyeros, C.P. 19230, Ciudad de La Habana, Cuba; e-mail: apalmarola@gmail.com

Dr Mikhail S. Romanov, Main Botanic Garden of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow 127276, Botanical St. 4, Russian Federation; e-mail: romanovmikhail@hotmail.com

Dr Alexey V. F. C. Bobrov, Recent Deposits and Pleistocene Palaeogeography Department, Geographical Faculty, M. V. Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow 119992, Russian Federation; e-mail: avfch_bobrov@mail.ru