Novitiae florae cubensis No. 26

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Ouratea neuridesii (Ochnaceae), a new species from central Cuba

Abstract

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Ouratea neuridesii is described as a species new to science, endemic to the mountains of Trinidad (Guamuhaya massif), central Cuba, and illustrated. It is easily distinguished from all other Cuban *Ouratea* species by its short, rigid branches and dense foliage as well as short, few-flowered paniculate inflorescences.

Additional key words: taxonomy, endemism, Topes de Collantes, mogote vegetation.

Ouratea Aubl. is a genus of trees and shrubs with simple, alternate leaves and entire, deciduous stipules. Between the secondary leaf veins, which are arcuate-ascending and become parallel to the leaf margin distally, the inter-secondary veins are either sub-parallel or densely reticulate. The flowers, borne in paniculate inflorescences, are bright yellow, bisexual, actinomorphic, pentamerous, with free sepals and petals, 10 stamens, 5 carpels inserted on a columnar receptacle, apically united to form a single central style or less frequently each with its distinct style. The fruits are drupaceous, each mature carpel separating to form a fleshy, bright blue or black drupe, all borne on the receptacle or torus, which becomes enlarged, fleshy and red-coloured.

The genus *Ouratea* is most numerous in northwestern South America. In Cuba 7 species and 2 nothospecies were known (Berazaín 2003, 2006): 3 in E Cuba (*O. revoluta* (C. Wright ex Griseb.) Engl., *O. xolismifolia* Britton & P. Wilson and *O. striata* (Tiegh.) Urb.), 3 in W Cuba (*O. elliptica* (A. Rich.) M. Gómez, *O. schizostyla* Berazaín and *O.* ×*acunae* Borhidi) and 3 in both W and C Cuba (*O. agrophylla* (Tiegh.) Urb., *O. nitida* (Sw.) Engl. and *O.* ×*savannarum* Britton & P. Wilson). During botanical expeditions to the Trinidad Mountains (or Guamuhaya massif), a plant was collected that differs notably from all other Cuban *Ouratea* species and pertains to a new species.

Fig. 1. *Ouratea neuridesii* – photograph of the holotype specimen.

Ouratea neuridesii I. Castañeda, **sp. nov.**
Holotype: *Castañeda & Noa 9064* (ULV; isotypes: B, HAC, HAJB, ULV). – Fig. 1-2.

A ceteris speciebus cubensibus hujus generis ramis brevibus rigidis foliisque crebris primo intuitu distinguitur. Folia parva venis intersecundariis reticulum densum formatibus; inflorescentiae pauciflorae, breviter paniculatae, rhachide ad 4 cm longo.

Small, up to 3 m tall tree with short and rigid branches. *Leaf blade* ovate to elliptical, measuring (3.3-)3.7(-4) × (1.5-)1.8(-2) cm, coriaceous, acute and sometimes slightly emarginate, base cuneate, margins entire and revolute; *secondary veins* somewhat prominent, arcuate-ascending; *inter-secondary veins* forming a dense reticulum. *Inflorescences* terminal or subterminal, short, corymbose-paniculate, few-flowered, with an up to 4 cm long rachis and up to 2.5 cm long lower branches. *Pedicels* 5 mm long. *Sepals* imbricate, ovate, mucronulate, measuring 3.8-4 × 1.8-2 mm, deciduous. *Petals* imbricate in the bud, bright yellow, obovate-orbicular, measuring 3.8-4 × 3-3.5 mm, membranous, with erose margin. *Stames* 10; anthers subsessile, 4-angular, 2.6 mm long, papillose, opening by two apicals pores. *Ovary* 5-merous, borne on a columnar receptacle 1-2 mm long; style gynobasic, 2.8 mm long. *Fruit* unknown.

Specimens seen. – Cuba: Prov. Sancti Spiritus: Trinidad, Mountains of Trinidad, Topes de Collantes ["Collante"], "Loma Mi Retiro", north slope, near the top, 800-900 m, mogote vegeta-

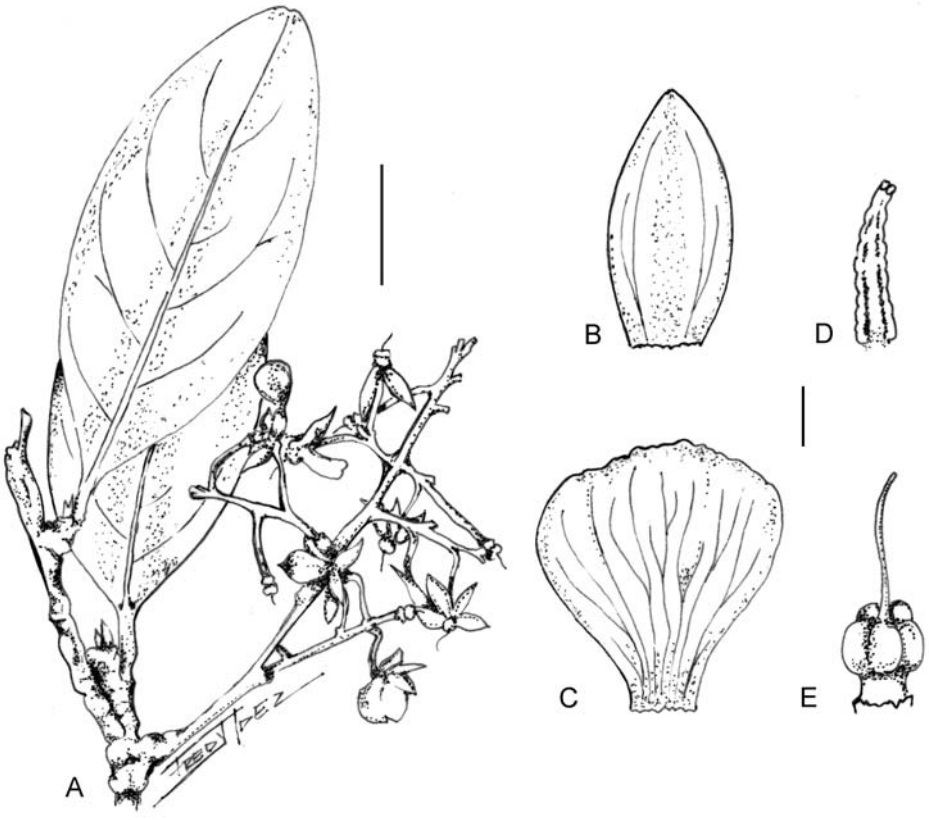

Fig. 2. *Ouratea neuridesii* – A: branch apex with leaves and inflorescence; B: sepal; C: petal (abaxial surface); D: anther; E: pistil. – Scale bars: A = 1 cm, B-D = 1 mm; drawing by Fredy Hernández Martínez from the holotype.

tion complex, 29.4.2006, *Castañeda & Noa 9064* (B, HAC, HAJB, ULV); ibid., 22.5.1999, *Castañeda & Vera 6840* (HPVC); ibid., 15.11.1991, *Noa & al. 4422* (HPVC).

Eponymy. – The epithet honours Neurides Vera Roca, connoisseur of the flora of the Mountains of Trinidad, who gave support to numerous botanists exploring that territory.

Affinities. – *Ouratea neuridesii* resembles *O. xolismifolia* Britton & P. Wilson, endemic to the Sierra Maestra range in E Cuba, in its small leaves and inflorescences, and densely reticulate inter-secondary leaf venation. However, it differs from this and all other Cuban species of the genus in its short and rigid branches, dense foliage, up to 4 cm long leaf blades and corymbose-paniculate, terminal or subterminal inflorescences with an up to 4 cm long rachis.

Characterization of the habitat. – The species grows in the vegetation complex characteristic of mogotes (steep-sided karstic hillocks): a low, open forest, with a dense shrubby undergrowth and abundant epiphytes. Among the associated species one may mention *Erythroxylum clarense* Borhidi & Muñíz, *Gyminda latifolia* (Sw.) Urb., *Mahonia tenuifolia* Loud. ex Steud., *Karwinskia potrerilloana* (Borhidi & Muñiz) Borhidi, *Casearia silvestris* subsp. *myricoides* (Griseb.) J. E. Gut., *Eugenia clarensis* Britton & P. Wilson, *Picramnia reticulata* Griseb, *Coccothrinax trinitensis* Borhidi & Muñiz and various species of the orchid genera *Pleurothallis* and *Lepanthes*.

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