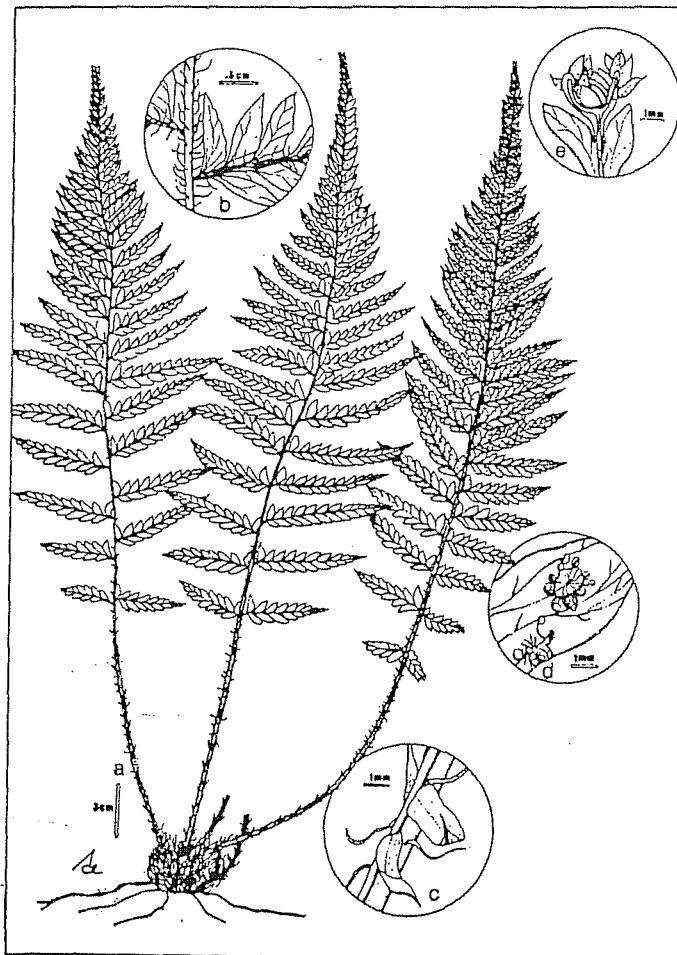


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PUERTO RICAN
PLANT SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN
STATUS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PLANTAS DE PUERTO RICO DE INTERES
ESPECIAL
ESTADO Y RECOMENDACIONES

George Proctor
Introduction by Jorge A. Moreno



Publicación Científica Miscelánea No. 2
Departamento de Recursos Naturales de Puerto Rico

Status Report on Mitracarpus polycladus Urban

Taxon name:	<u>Mitracarpus polycladus</u> Urban
Common name:	None
Family:	Rubiaceae
State where taxon occurs:	Puerto Rico
Current federal status:	Under review
Recommended federal status:	Threatened
Author of report:	George R. Proctor
Agency to whom information and comments should be sent:	

Mitracarpus polycladus Urban

I. Species information

1. Classification and nomenclature

- A. Scientific name: Mitracarpus polycladus Urban
- B. Bibliographic citation: Urban, Symb. Antill. 3: 389. 1903.
- C. Typification: Sintenis 3750. Puerto Rico, Municipio de Guánica: rocky shore at Caña Gorda. (Holotype: B, destroyed; isotype NY, US).
- D. Synonyms: Mitracarpus polycladus Urban var. sabaensis Urban, Symb. Antill. 7: 551. 1913. (Type: Boldingh 1377, from Saba, isotype NY)
- E. Common name: None
- F. Family: Rubiaceae
- G. History of the taxon: This species was first discovered in February, 1886, by the German botanical collector Paul Sintenis, on coastal rocks near Caña Gorda, Guánica, Puerto Rico, and soon after was also found by the Dutch botanist Boldingh on the island of Saba in the Lesser Antilles. To this day, M. polycladus is known to occur only in these two areas. In 1913, Urban sought to distinguish the Saba population as a separate variety, but Howard (Fl. Less. Antill. 6: 436. 1989) has pointed out that careful study of several Saba collections, including isotype material, does not support Urban's conclusions. In recent years, this species has been collected on several occasions along the Guánica coast. During the present year, drought conditions have prevented enumeration of the extant Guánica population.
- H. Current alternative taxonomic treatment: None

2. Present legal or other formal status:

Not previously considered or listed at any level (International, National, or State).

3. Description

A. Non-technical:

B. Technical:

Suffrutescent perennial much branched near base, the erect or somewhat spreading stems up to 45 cm. tall, 4-angled, glabrous. Stipular sheath to 3 mm. long, with numerous setae. Petioles obsolete; leaf-blades linear to linear-lanceolate, 2-4.5 cm. long, 0.3-0.5 cm. broad, the apex acute to apiculate, the base decurrent, the margins often inrolled, glabrous throughout. Inflorescence capitate, terminal, 8-13 mm. in diameter, many-flowered, subtended by 3 bract-like leaves, one larger than the others; lateral sepals 2-3 mm. long, ovate-lanceolate, ciliate; corolla white, ca. 5 mm. long, its lobes ovate. Capsule 1.5 mm. in diameter, circumscissile below the middle; seeds black.

C. Local field characters:

This species resembles a Spermacoce in habit and general appearance, but if fruiting capsules are present is easily recognized by their splitting horizontally; in Spermacoce, the capsules split vertically. M. polycladus is distinguished from M. maxwelliae and M. hirtus by its glabrous leaves, and from M. portoricensis by shorter leaves, narrower stipular sheaths, smaller flower-heads (0.8-1.3 cm. vs. up to 2 cm.), and larger capsules (1.5 mm. vs. 1 mm.).

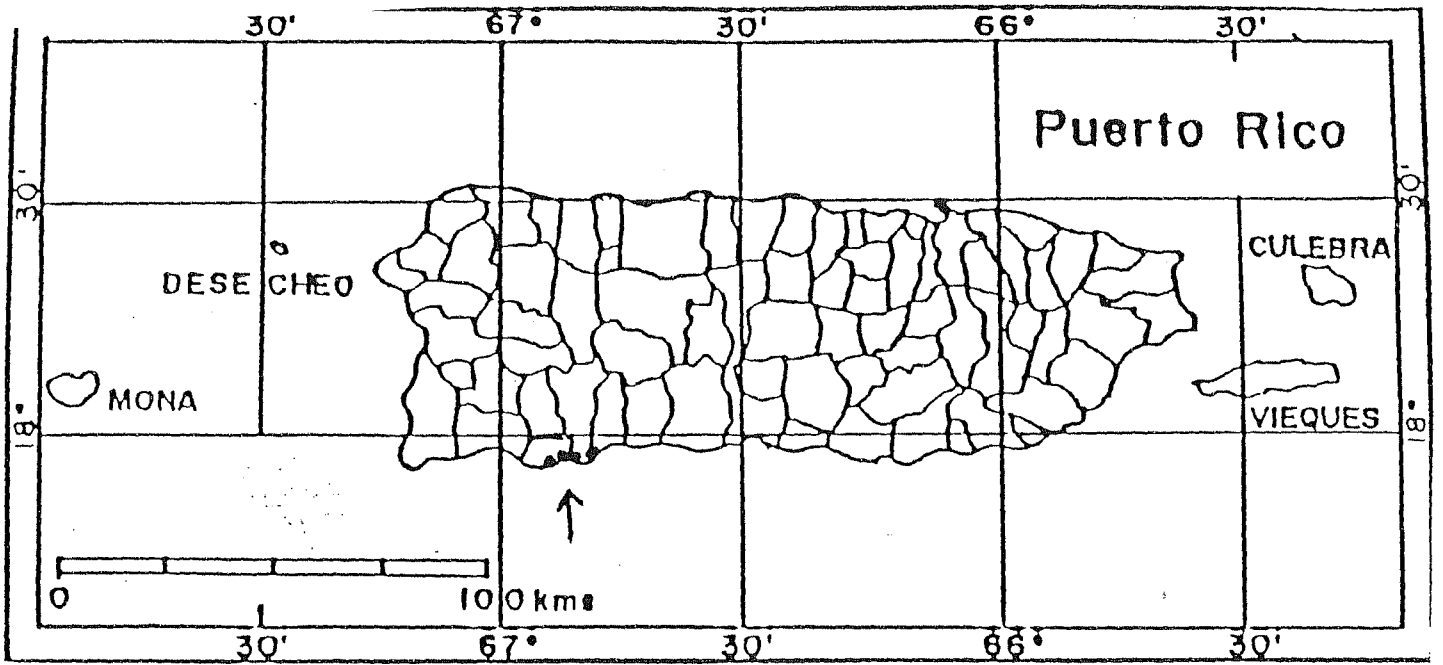
4. Geographic distribution:

Mitracarpus polycladus is confined to the coast of Guánica in Puerto Rico, and to the Lesser Antillean island of Saba.

5. Environment and habitat:

Usually occurs in crevices and soil-pockets of arid coastal rocks.

Note: Due to dry conditions in Guánica during all of 1991 it has not yet been possible to carry out field survey of this species.

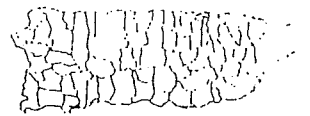


MITRACARPUS POLYCLADUS Urban



FLORA DE PUERTO RICO
Departamento de Recursos Naturales
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Municipio de Guánica



Mitracarpus polycladus Urban

GUANICA STATE FOREST: Road 333, km. 7.4, on rocky
slope, elev. c. 30 m.

Shrubby annual.

