



Synopsis of *Abutilon* (Malvoideae, Malvaceae) in the state of São Paulo, Brazil

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Abstract

Abutilon is represented in the state of São Paulo by 18 species mainly distributed in the Atlantic Forest, especially in dense rainforest. This work includes an identification key, illustrations, and comments on morphology, habitat, geographical distribution and conservation status. A new species (*Abutilon costicalyx*), three new synonyms, and three new records for São Paulo are presented.

Key words: flora, new species, new records, synonyms, taxonomy, Atlantic Forest

Introduction

Abutilon Mill. is one of the five largest genera of the subfamily Malvoideae (tribe Malveae), differing from other genera of its tribe mainly in having tri- to multi-seeded mericarps lacking a median constriction, an endoglossum and dorsal wings.

The genus comprises approximately 160 species distributed worldwide, but occurs predominantly in the Neotropical region, from the United States to Uruguay, with the highest concentration in South America (Fryxell 1997, 1988), with 81 species. Forty eight species occur throughout Brazil, 40 of which are endemic, with the greatest diversity in the Atlantic Forest domain (Esteves 2010) of the south and southeast.

Among the most important contributions on the taxonomy of the genus, those by Fryxell (1997, 2002) stand out, addressing issues concerning the generic circumscription of *Abutilon*, and providing a list of specific names already assigned to the genus, including suggestions for solving many nomenclatural problems. Other relevant studies include those by Grisebach (1859), Schumann (1891), and Fryxell (1988) on infrageneric classification.

Abutilon has been included in several regional floristic treatments in North and South America. However, the treatment by Schumann (1891), in *Flora Brasiliensis*, is still the most complete and comprehensive with regard to the study of the species occurring in Brazil. Other contributions were made by Esteves (1986) and Esteves & Krapovickas (2009) for the Flora of Minas Gerais (Serra do Cipó and Serra de Grão-Mogol), and Takeuchi (2011) for the Flora of São Paulo. Also important are contributions by Krapovickas (1982) and Esteves & Krapovickas (2002) describing new species from the states of Minas Gerais and São Paulo, respectively.

The economic importance of the genus lies primarily in their potential use as ornamental plants. Additionally, some species are used in fiber production for textile and cordage (Cheatham *et al.* 1995), as well as in folk medicine for their alleged decongestant, anti-inflammatory, analgesic and antibacterial properties (Austin 2004, Khare 2007).

Two arguments support the publication of the present paper: 1) Relatively few species of *Abutilon* from Brazil (especially in the state of São Paulo) have been treated in floristic and taxonomic studies; 2) the genus is highly complex, its morphological limits and species delimitation not being well understood. This work is