



Pitcairnia albifolia (Bromeliaceae), a new species from the Talamanca Mountains in Veraguas Province, Panama

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Introduction

Bromeliaceae Juss. comprises 3,348 species and 58 genera (Luther 2012), grouped in subfamilies Brocchinioideae, Bromelioideae, Hechtioideae, Lindmanioideae, Navioideae, Pitcairnioideae, Puyoideae, and Tillandsioideae (Givnish et al. 2007). According to Luther (2012), the genus *Pitcairnia* Ruiz & Pav. has ca. 342 species and is the most diverse in Pitcairnioideae.

In Panama, Cáceres González et al. (2011) reported the Bromeliaceae to comprise 206 species in 7 genera; the genus *Pitcairnia* including 23 species, with 6 of them endemics and two species previously not known from Panama, *P. halophila* L.B. Smith (1964: 32) and *P. wendlandii* Baker (1881: 306). Recently *Guzmania panamensis* Cáceres González (2013: 69) was published from Panama; this species has been collected in Santa Fe National Park (Western Panama). However, no new taxa of *Pitcairnia* have been described from Panama since Grant (1998).

This new species, *Pitcairnia albifolia*, was collected during a fieldtrip to the Santa Fe National Park, Veraguas Province, Panama, in July 2009, as part of a general floristic survey of a region locally called La Sabaneta, on the poorly-explored Caribbean mountain forests. The La Sabaneta area is found along the colonial Camino de Chilagre from Santa Fe to the Mines of Concepción and has been burned in the past (personal communication with locals), evidenced by seeing charcoal. Subsequently, herbarium collections of *Pitcairnia* from 12 herbaria (B, CR, FR, INB, MO, NY, PMA, SCZ, SEL, UCH, USJ and WU; abbreviations from Thiers [continuously updated]) were studied, confirming that the Santa Fe National Park region is a poorly collected area. This is principally due to difficult orography, access and the ecological landscape that make it a place with a great potential for the discovery of new species. It was found that the specimen did not match any of the known taxa of the genus and, hence, is described and illustrated here as a new species.

Pitcairnia albifolia Cáceres González & A. Ibáñez, *sp. nov.* (Fig. 1–3)

Type:—PANAMA. Veraguas Prov.: Distr. Santa Fe, Santa Fe National Park, La Sabaneta, premontane rain forest, elevation 1100 m, 08° 40' 38.70" N, 80° 59' 31.00" W, 15 July 2009, *Fermín Hernández, José Guerra, Víctor Concepción & Alicia Ibáñez 5731 AI* (holotype: PMA!; isotype: UCH!).

This new species is similar to *Pitcairnia nigra*, but differs from it by its floral bracts that are shorter (4–6 mm long) and flowers pedicellate (up to 5 mm long), vs. floral bracts longer (65–80 mm long) and flowers sessile. The leaves in *Pitcairnia albifolia* are shorter (12.5–16.0 cm long × 3–4 cm wide) and adaxially densely covered with white lepidote trichomes; whereas the leaves in *P. nigra* are longer (60–67 cm long × 10–14 cm wide) and soon glabrous.

Plant terrestrial or saxicolous, acaulescent with a semi-erect short rhizome ca. 11 cm long and 3 cm diameter, covered by the densely imbricate old leaf-bases and roots, flowering ca. 52 cm high, normally individual plant with few leaves (5–7). Leaves semi-arching, homomorphic, persisting, petiolate, entire, stiff-chartaceous, 12.5–16.0 cm long, much shorter than the inflorescence; petiole 2.5–3.0 cm long, 0.5–1.5 cm wide, chartaceous, venation conspicuous, margins entire, white-lepidote on both sides; blades ovate-lanceolate to elliptic, 9–12 cm long × 3–4 cm wide (3–4 times longer

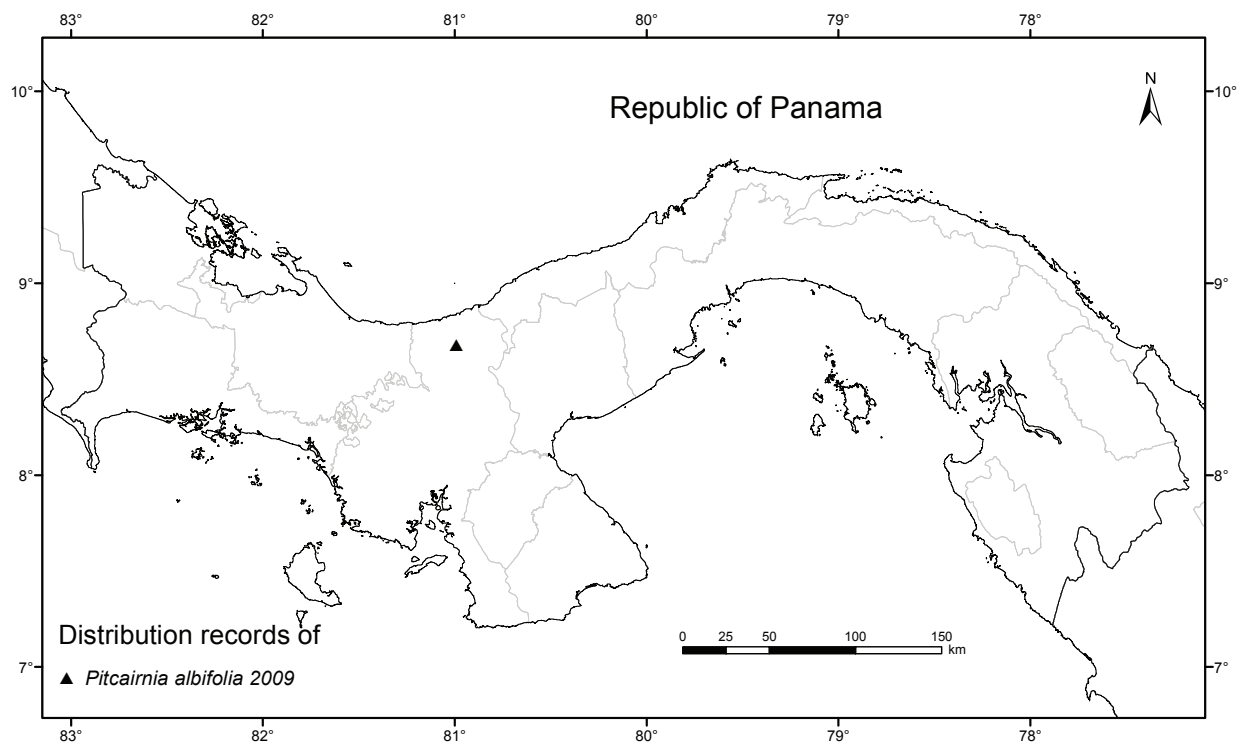


FIGURE 3. Geographical distribution of *Pitcairnia albifolia*. Map created by D. A. Cáceres González using ArcGIS Version 10.2.

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