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NOVITATES RIO MUNIS 1. A NEW ENDEMIC SCAPHOPETALUM (MALVACEAE) FROM MOUNT MITRA, EQUATORIAL GUINEA

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SUMMARY

A new species of *Scaphopetalum* from Monte Mitra is described.

Key words: Malvaceae, *Scaphopetalum*, Central Africa, Equatorial Guinea, taxonomy.

During a biodiversity assessment of the Monte Mitra forest in October 2005 a *Scaphopetalum* with white flowers was encountered. This is exceptional as all other *Scaphopetalum* species have either yellow or dark purple petals (Germain, 1963; Hallé, 1968; Schumann, 1900; Leal, in prep). This new *Scaphopetalum* is also the first endemic species found on the mainland of Equatorial Guinea (Río Muní). As this species was found in Monte Alen National Park, part of a national system of protected areas created by President Teodoro Obiang Nguema, it is a good opportunity to recognize the president's conservation efforts by commemorating him.

Scaphopetalum obiangianum M.E. Leal, *spec. nov.* — Fig. 1

> Haec species eum excipio intra *Scaphopetalo* propter floribus ablis suis et ceterum fructus brevi subconatus quinque costatis. — Typus: *M.E. Leal 846* (holo MO; iso BATA, WAG), Equatorial Guinea, Monte Mitra, 5 October 2005.

Small *shrub* 20–150 cm tall. Petiole 3–5 mm. *Leaves* obovate, glabrous and shiny, 7.5–13 by 2.5–5.5 cm, base rounded, apex shortly caudate. *Inflorescence* raminascent, few-flowered cymes, peduncle 3–4 mm long, 1–5 flowers, pedicel 2–3 cm. *Sepals* 9–10 by 4–3 mm narrowly ovate, hairy on the inside of the tip. *Petals* hooded, whitish transparent and ribbed, 0.8–1 by 0.5–0.7 cm, apex with three short slips. *Stamens* fused in vase-like tube, 1 cm diam. and 0.5 cm high, with 5 sharply angled lobes, each lobe has a red ray, anthers inserted on the lobes. *Ovary* 5-lobed, style 1 mm long. *Capsule* glabrous, 1.5–2 by 0.6–0.9 cm, with 5 sharply angled ridges. *Seeds* 2 mm, adorned with a brown aril.

Distribution — Equatorial Guinea, at the base of Monte Mitra.

Habitat — Understorey of (submontane) rain forest at an altitude of 700 m.

Note — Equatorial Guinea is the only country in central Africa without a national flora. Some believe that such a reference book is not needed arguing that the plants of Equatorial Guinea are completely a subset of those found in Cameroon and Gabon

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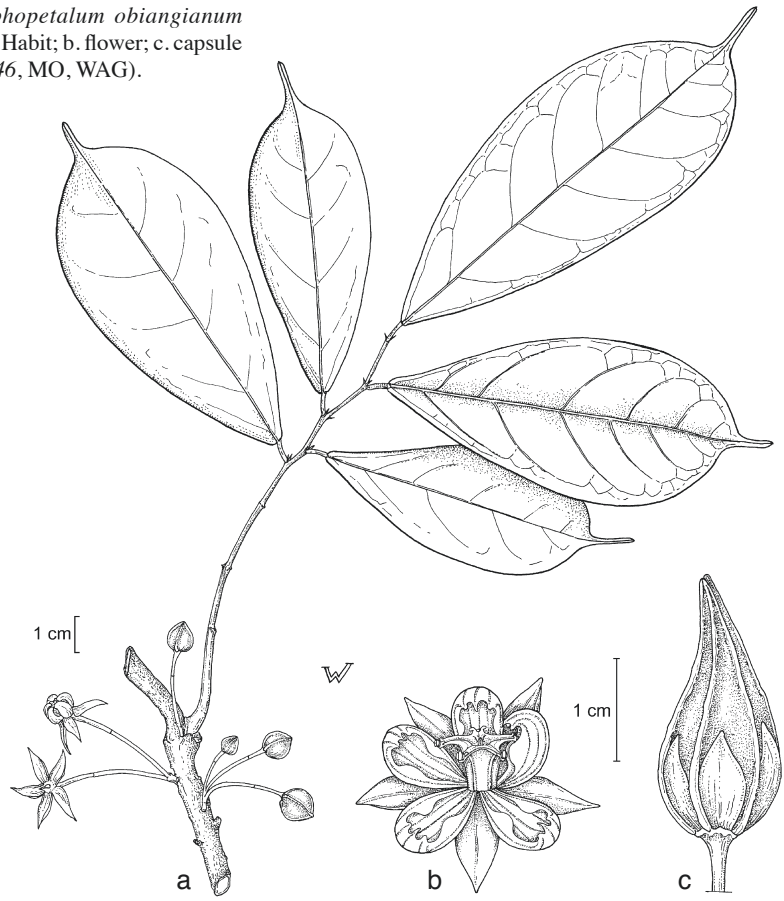


Fig. 1. *Scaphopetalum obiangianum* M.E. Leal. a. Habit; b. flower; c. capsule (a–c: *Leal 846*, MO, WAG).

and adequately covered by the national floras of those countries. This new species from mainland Río Muní suggests that Equatorial Guinea's flora may include many endemic contributions. The new find also demonstrates our poor knowledge of Equatorial Guinea's flora and the need for more botanical field research.

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