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A NEW SPECIES OF COLA (MALVACEAE) FROM WEST AFRICA

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SUMMARY

A new *Cola* species from the forests of Liberia is described.

Key words: Malvaceae, *Cola,* Africa, taxonomy.

During a recent botanical expedition in the forests of southeast Liberia an undescribed species of *Cola* was found. At first sight this species did look like an *Octolobus* species because of the size and shape of the flowers and fruits, but, after opening a flower, the single whorl of carpels with one style identified it as a species of *Cola*. No clear relative of the new species could be found. In the Flora of West Tropical Africa (Keay, 1958: 321) it can only key out as *Cola altissima*; however, except for the size of the flower and the single whorl of anthers, it differs in almost all other characteristics.

Cola liberica Jongkind, *spec. nov.* — Fig. 1

> Arbuscula usque ad 5 m alta, monoica. Folia matura glabra, oblanceolata, basi rotundata, apice acuminata. Flores foeminei sessiles, perianthio extra piloso, calyce 7-lobato, carpellis dense tomentosis, stigmatibus papillosis. Fructus sessiles, 5 vel 6 folliculis velutinis. — Typus: *Jongkind & Blyden 5681* (holo WAG; iso K, MO), Liberia, Cestos-Sanguin area, Cooper's Logging Concession, 7 December 2002.

Monoecious treelet c. 5 m high. *Branchlets* and petiole dense, to 2 mm long, pale brown pilose, most hairs star-shaped. *Leaves* simple, more or less whorled; petiole 1.5–10 cm long, pulvinate at base and apex; blade oblanceolate, 13–32 cm long and 3.5–8.5 cm wide, glabrous or nearly so when mature, with 15–24 pairs of main lateral nerves, midrib prominent above; base more or less rounded; apex acuminate. *Stipules* long and conspicuous, brown, papery, spreading. *Inflorescence* sessile, between the leaves on the branch, surrounded by large brown papery bracts, looking like the stipulae. *Female flowers* sessile, yellow, short appressed hairy on the outside, glabrous within; calyx tube 2 cm long, lobes 2.5 cm long with a conspicuously fringed margin; carpels densely hairy; stigma papillate; anthers in one whorl. Male flowers not known. *Fruits* sessile, orange-brown, densely brownish hairy, wrinkled when dry; 5 or 6 follicles subglobose, c. 2.5 cm in diameter, 1- or 2-seeded.

Distribution & Habit — Forests in Liberia.

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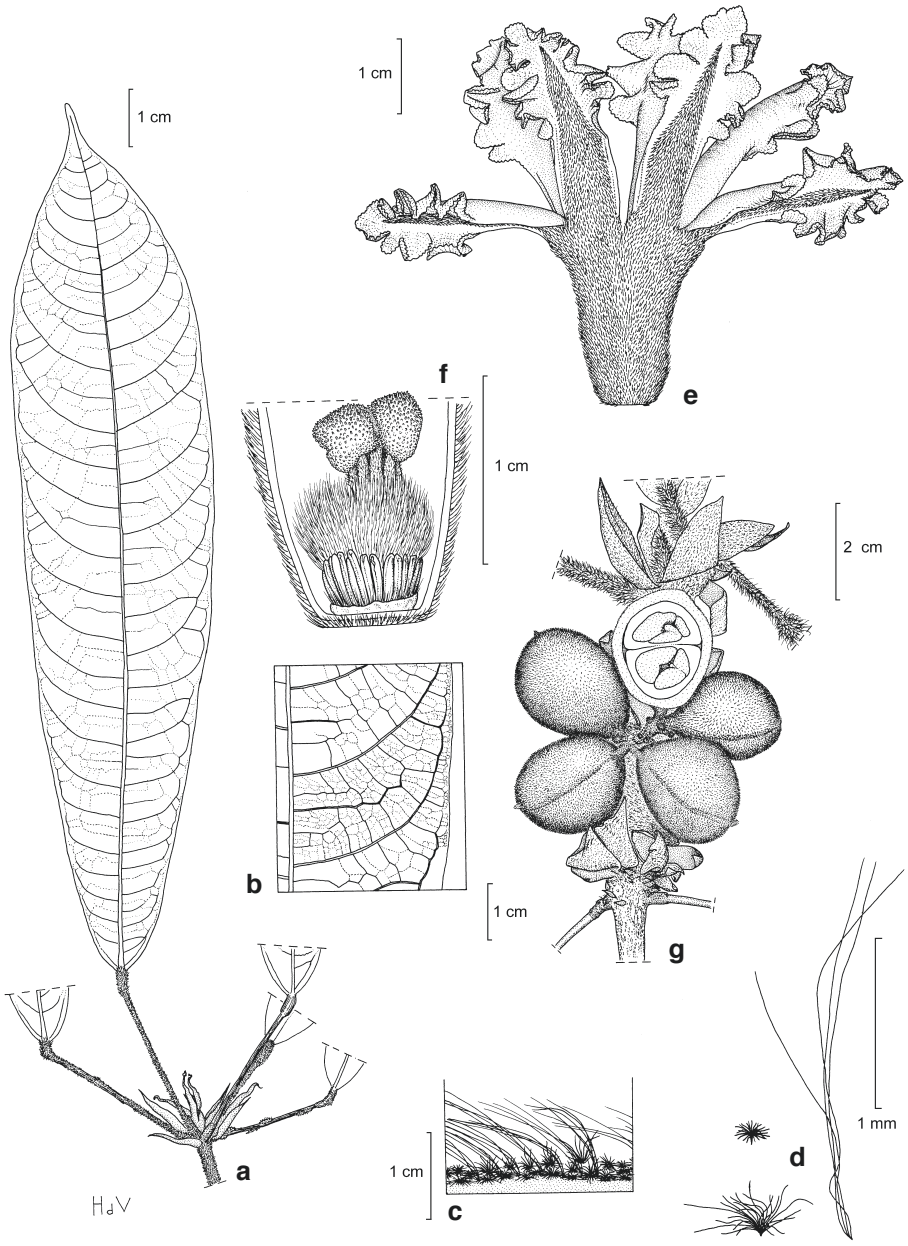


Fig. 1. *Cola liberica* Jongkind. a. Leaf; b. detail of the lower surface; c. detail indumentum petiole; d. individual hairs; e. flower; f. cross section flower showing carpels, style and anthers; g. mature carpels with one in cross section (a–e: *Jongkind 5521*; f, g: *Jongkind 5681*).

Note — No other material of this species could be found in the herbaria of Kew and Wageningen, the herbaria where most collections of Liberia are stored.

Additional specimen examined:
LIBERIA: *Jongkind & Blyden 5521* (WAG), Sapo National Park, just east of Sinoe River.

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REFERENCE

Keay, R.W.J. 1958. Flora of West Tropical Africa, second edition, part 1, 2: 321. Crown Agents for Oversea Governments and Administration, London.