Synopsis of *Phyllanthus* Section *Pityrocladus*,
a New Neotropical Section

Since the publication of my synopsis of the subgenera and sections of *Phyllanthus* over four decades ago (Webster, 1956), a considerable number of new species and some new sections have been published. In anticipation of a new synopsis of the supraspecific taxa of *Phyllanthus* (Webster, ined.), several new sections based on a revision of the neotropical species.

*Phyllanthus* sect. *Pityrocladus* G. L. Webster, sect. nov. Type species: *Phyllanthus ruscifolius* Kunth

Monoecious (rarely dioecious) shrubs, often scandent; branches and branchlets ± scabridulous or scurfy; branchlets pinnatiform, with mostly 10—50 leaves; leaf blades chartaceous, ovate to linear-oblong, obtuse or rounded to acuminate; stipules usually persistent; flowers in axillary unisexual or bisexual cymes; sepals 5 or 6, greenish to reddish; ♂ disk dissected (segments sometimes ± confluent); stamens 2—5 (-7), filaments connate (rarely free); anthers dehiscing horizontally or obliquely; pollen grains subglobose, 4- or 5-colporate; ♀ pedicel 2—7 mm long in fruit; disk patelliform or dissected; ovary 3-locular; styles free or basally connate, bifid to unlobed; fruit dehiscent or indehiscent; seeds smooth (faintly striate), ≤ 2 mm long.

This primarily South American group of 7 species has one Central American representative, *Phyllanthus valerii* Standl. (Costa Rica). The 4-5-colporate pollen indicates a probable assignment of the section to subg. *Emblica*, although the pollen grains are divergent in not being prolate. Section *Pityrocladus* is similar to sect. *Microglochidion* Müll. Arg. in a number of respects (including pollen), but differs in its scurfy indumentum, eglandular leaves, and tendency towards a scandent habit.

Key to the species

1 Leaves glabrous on both faces (at most scabridulous or papillate on petiole and/or midrib; veins distinctly prominulous on abaxial face; branchlets 10—30 cm long, with 20—35 leaves, 0.8—1.8 mm thick; ♂ pedicels 3—7 mm long; stamens 3—6; sepals 5; ♀ pedicels 2—4 mm long.

2 Monoecious; leaf blades elliptic, 1.5—2.5 cm long, rounded and apiculate at apex; stamens (3-) 4—6; fruits indehiscent; styles unlobed or apically bifid. 1. *P. symphoricarpoides*

2 Dioecious; leaf blades ovate-lanceolate, 3—6 cm long, acuminate; stamens 3; fruits dehiscent; styles bifid; branchlets winged. 2. *P. spontifolius*

1 Leaf blades glabrous or hirsutulous adaxially; veins not prominulous (or if so, blades distinctly hirsutulous abaxially); branchlets 5—25 cm long, with 5—75 leaves, 0.4—1 mm thick; ♂ pedicels 0.5—7.5 mm long; stamens 2 or 3; fruiting pedicels 1—4 mm long.

3 Leaf blades abaxially copiously hirsutulous, with prominent lateral veins; stamens 2.

4 Monoecious; branchlets 0.6—0.9 mm thick, with 5—11 leaves; leaf blades 1.5—3.5 cm long; petioles 1—2 mm long; stipules 3—4.5 mm long; styles unlobed. 3. *P. popayanensis*

4 Dioecious; branchlets 0.4—0.6 mm thick, with 20—45 leaves; leaf blades 1—1.5 cm long; petioles ca 0.5 mm long; stipules 1.5—2 mm long. 4. *P. ruscifolius*

3 Leaf blades abaxially glabrous or minutely scabridulous, veins not prominulous; stamens 2 or 3.

5 Stamens 3 (rarely 2); ♂ pedicels 4—8 mm long; leaves alveolate-punctate beneath.
5. **P. bahiensis**

5 Stamens 2 (rarely 3); ♂ pedicels 1—1.5 mm long.

6 Leaves elliptic, abruptly contracted to a point, alveolate-recticate abaxially, 0.5—7 cm broad; branchlets 0.4—0.7 mm thick; stipules 1—1.5 mm long; ♂ disk segments discrete, flat.

6. **P. cuatrecasanus**

6 Leaves oblong, obtuse-apiculate, 2—5 mm broad, smooth abaxially, 0.2—0.5 cm broad; branchlets 0.7—1 mm thick; stipules 2—3.5 mm long; ♂ disk segments massive, ± confluent.

7. **P. valerii**

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Montane thickets, 1500—2750 m, Colombia to Peru.


Montane thickets, 1000—2000 m, Colombia to Ecuador.


Montane thickets, 2000—2800 m, Colombia (Cauca).


Montane thickets, 1900—2200 m, Colombia (Valle del Cauca).


Coastal forests (Mata Atlántica), Brazil (Bahia and Sergipe).

6. **Phyllanthus cuatrecasanus** G. L. Webster, sp. nov. T.: Colombia, Caquetá, Quebrada del Río Hacha, 2100—2250 m, *Cuatrecasas 8533* (holotype: US).

Dioecious shrub; branchlets terete, scabrid-hirtellus, 8—15 cm long, 0.4-0.7 mm thick, with 25—50 leaves; leaf blades staminate flowers 2—5 in axillary brachyblasts 1—2 mm long; staminate pedicel c. 1.5 mm long; sepals 5, elliptical, 1.3—1.6 mm long; disk segments 5, roundish, c. 0.2 mm broad; stamens 2, filaments connate; anthers dehiscing obliquely.

Known only from the type collection.


Montane forests, Costa Rica, 1200—2050 m; very similar plants have been collected in Bolivia.