A NEW SPECIES OF GALACTIA (FABACEAE) FROM CENTRAL AMERICA

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ABSTRACT

Galactia serpentina Nesom, sp. nov., from Honduras has procumbent, non-twining stems and linear-oblong leaflets with glaucous adaxial surfaces. It apparently has no close relative in Central America or Mexico but is most closely similar to G. pinetorum Small of southern Florida.

In preparation of the taxonomic treatment of Galactia for the Flora of North America North of Mexico, I surveyed collections from Mexico and Central America. A collection from Honduras is distinctive and apparently represents a previously unnamed species.

Galactia serpentina Nesom, sp. nov. TYPE: HONDURAS. Dept. Copan. Ca. 9 air km NNE of Copan, near lumber road on SE-facing slope, igneous soil, with Pinus oocarpa and pyrophytic shrubs, mainly melastomes, infrequent trailing perennial, 14 Jun 1977, J.M. Poole and W.A. Wilson 1073 (holotype: LL!; isotype: LL!).

Similar to Galactia pinetorum Small (Florida) in its prostrate habit and linear-oblong leaflets but different in its shorter leaflets with abaxial surfaces glaucous and usually sericeous and shorter rachises and corollas. Galactia anomala Lundell (Belize) differs in its twining-climbing habit, solitary, non-pedunculate flowers, and leaflets with attenuate bases.

Stems procumbent, non-twining, not rooting at the nodes, 20–30 inches long, slightly lignescent proximally, sparsely strigose to hirsute-strigose with retrorsely appressed to deflexed hairs. Leaflets 3, petiolulate; petioles 8–17 mm; blades linear-oblong, slightly narrowing distally, 20–32 x 2–7 mm, coriaceous, apices obtuse to rounded, margins slightly but distinctly revolute, strigose-sericeous and glaucous abaxially, minutely strigose adaxially with loosely appressed hairs, margins densely strigose adaxially, veins slightly raised on both surfaces. Rachises 15–40 mm; flowers 3–6, mostly clustered distally. Calyces 4–5 mm, loosely strigose. Corollas 8–9 mm, rose-pink, banner striped. Fruits apparently densely sericeous, mature size not observed.

Known only from the type collection. Figures 1 and 2.

The species apparently most closely similar to Galactia serpentina is G. pinetorum Small of southern Florida, which also has linear leaves and procumbent, non-twining stems, but G. pinetorum has longer, relatively narrower leaflets with non-glaucous, glabrate to sparsely strigillose abaxial surfaces and longer rachises and larger corollas. Galactia martii DC. var. martii of Brazil also has linear leaves and a prostrate habit but it differs conspicuously from G. serpentina in its flowers tightly clustered at the peduncle apex and pendulous, conduplicate folded leaflets (see Burkart 1971). Other Galactia species with linear to narrowly oblanceolate leaflets are strong-climbing in habit — e.g., G. grisebachii Urb., G. isopoda Urb., G. jenningsii Britt., G. longifolia (Jacq.) Benth, and G. volubilis (L.) Britt. sensu Nesom (2015). Galactia serpentina has been identified as the Belize endemic G. anomala Lundell (see inset, Fig. 1) but the latter has twining stems, solitary, axillary, sessile flowers, and narrowly oblanceolate leaflets with basally attenuate, essentially sessile blades (a feature seen elsewhere in the genus only in G. gracillima Benth. of Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay).
Figure 1. *Galactia serpentina*, holotype. Inset shows portion of *G. anomala* holotype (MICH).
Figure 2. *Galactia serpentina*, isotype.
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LITERATURE CITED
