

A Preliminary Report on the Cytology of Some Cape Verde Islands Plants

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Resumen

Informe preliminar sobre la citología de algunas plantas del Archipiélago de Cabo Verde. — Primeras investigaciones citológicas de material del área citado, tratando 9 especies nativas, por parte endémica en las Cabo Verde.

The Cape Verde Islands flora is probably the least studied of the Macaronesian insular floras and experimental material from the area is only very rarely available for investigation.

A recent botanical expedition to the islands by Dr. E.R. Sventenius and Professor A. González in the Spring of 1970 provided the authors with seed samples of a number of species and the results of the initial cytological studies are presented in this short communication which is the first on the cytology of Cape Verde Islands' plants.

Methods

Somatic chromosome counts were made from the root tips of seedlings grown from samples collected and identified by Sventenius. Root tips were pretreated in a saturated solution of paradichlorobenzene for two hours, fixed in acetic alcohol (1:3), stained in basic fuchsin and squashed in acetic orcein.

Results

Calotropis procera R.Br., Asclepiadaceae
 $2n = 26$

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Seed collection: Island of Sal, near the airport. This species is a common subtropical weed and chromosome counts of $2n = 22$ have been previously reported by Miede (1962). Chevalier (1935) refers the Sal population of this species to var *insularis* A. Chev.

Euphorbia tuckeyana Steudel, Euphorbiaceae
 $2n = 20$

Seed collection: Island of San Antao. This endemic species is a member of the section *Pachycladae* (Boiss.) Tutin, a frutescent group centred on the Canary Islands and similar counts have been reported for several Canarian species.

Lotus brunneri Webb, Leguminosae
 $2n = 14$

Seed collection: Island of San Antao. The somatic chromosome number $2n = 14$ is common in *Lotus* section *Pedrosia* (Lowe) R.P. Murray to which this endemic species belongs.

Limonium braunii (Bolle) A.Chev., Plumbaginaceae
 $2n = 12$

Seed collection: Island of San Antao, between Ribeira do S. Paul and Ribeira Brava. The base number $x = 6$ is reported by Borgen (1970) in the Canarian species *L. papillatum* and *L. ovalifolium*. In most of the endemic Canarian species, however, the base number $x = 7$ is prevalent. *L. braunii* is endemic to the Cape Verde Islands.

Campylanthus spathulatus A.Chev., Scrophulariaceae
 $2n = 14$

Seed collection: Island of San Antao, to the east of Ribeira Grande. Larsen (1960) reports the same somatic chromosome number in *C. salsoides* (L.fil) Roth. from the Canary Islands. *C. spathulatus* is endemic to San Antao.

Melanoselinum hirtum (Schmidt) A. Chev., Umbelliferae
 $2n = 18$

Seed collection: Island of San Thiago, Ribeira St. Domingo. Larsen (1962) reports $2n = 20$ from the Madeiran species

M. decipiens (Schrad.) Hoffm. This species is a Cape Verde Islands endemic.

M. bichoffii (Schmidt) A.Chev., Umbelliferae
 $2n = 22$

Seed collection: Island of San Antao, Ribeira do Paul.
The base number in the genus *Melanoselinum* appears to be variable, $x = 9, 10, 11$ having been recorded. *M. bichoffii* is known only from the Cape Verde Islands.

Forsskalea procruidifolia Webb, Urticaceae
 $2n = 14$

Seed collection: Island of San Thiago. Pico de Antonia.
The chromosome number of this endemic species differs from that recorded by Larsen (1962) in the Canarian/North African species. *F. angustifolia* Retz. $2n = 22$.

Dracaena draco L., Liliaceae
 $2n = 40$

Seed collection: Island of San Antao, Ribeira do Paul.
Borgen (1969) reports the same chromosome number from Canarian material of this Macaronesian species.

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