**Rediscovery of *Sideroxylon marginata* (Decne.) Cout. (Sapotaceae) in São Nicolau, Cape Verde Islands**


*Sideroxylon marginata* (Decne.) Cout. is a very rare, endemic tree from the Cape Verde archipelago, which is currently known from the islands of Santo Antão, São Vicente, São Nicolau, Santiago, Fogo and Brava, with an old record from Boavista (Brochmann et al., 1997 [Sommerfeltia 24: 1-356]; Lobin et al., 2005 [Vieraea 33: 119-144]; Sánchez-Pinto et al. in Arechavaleta et al., 2005 [Lista preliminar de especies silvestres de Cabo Verde. Hongos, Plantas y Animales Terrestres 2005]). It is found on cliffs and in gorges, from sea level up to 1,350 m a.s.l., but mostly between 200 and 1,000 m (Lobin et al., 2005).

On São Nicolau the only record of this species is from 23rd November 1976: a herbarium specimen collected by Per Sunding east of Cachaço village, at an altitude of 650 m, which is deposited in O (Sunding, 1982 [Garcia de Orta, Sér. Bot., 5 (2): 125-138]), and there is also a duplicate of it in LPA (Lobin et al., 2005). In this sense, Lobin et al. (2005) pointed out that “…since then the presence has never been reconfirmed”. It was previously considered “Critically Endangered (CR)” on this island (Gomes et al. in Leyens & Lobin, 1996 [Cour. Forsch.-Inst. Senckenberg, 193: 1-140]; Brochmann et al., 1997).

On 12th April 1999, during a short ornithological and naturalistic trip to this island, I found two individuals of *S. marginata* growing together on a volcanic dyke, very close to a traditional path which connects the localities of Cachaço and Ribeira Brava. I collected a sample of one of these trees, which is deposited in TFMC herbarium (see the information on it below). At that moment, there were many floral buds in their early stage of development, but no open flowers or fruits. In a second visit to the same site after more than a decade, on 10th November 2010, at least one individual was still alive and in a healthy state, being possible to obtain several digital photos of it (Figures 1 & 2). It had no flowers or fruits. The approximate UTM coordinates (WGS84) of this site are: 26Q 784649 / 1839579.

It is almost sure that this locality is exactly the same quoted by Sunding (1982), as it is very close to Cachaço and the altitude is about 650 m, confirmed by using Google Earth programme. The site is in the periphery of the Monte Gordo Natural Park, a recently established protected area. The cliffs around the individuals of *S. marginata* hold several other endemic plants, like *Aeonium gorgoneum* J. A. Schmidt, *Campanula jacobaea* Web., *Dracaena draco* (L.) L. ssp. *caboverdeana* Marrero Rodr. & R. Almeida, *Echium stenosiphon* Webb, *Euphorbia tuckeyana* Webb, *Globularia amygdalifolia* Webb, *Launaea picridioides* (Webb) Engl., *Lavandula rotundifolia* Benth., *Paronychia illecebroides* Webb, *Periploca laevigata* Aiton ssp. *chevalieri* (Browicz) G. Kunkel, *Sarcostemma daltonii* Decne., and *Verbascum capitis-viridis* Hub.-Mor. This place is without doubt one of the
most important for the indigenous flora of the island, as it is a mountainous area with cliffs orientated to the north and northeast, within the humid and subhumid zones established by Brochmann et al. (1997).

The current rarity of *S. marginata* in the whole archipelago, where it is locally known as “marmulano” (Barbosa, 1961 [Garcia de Orta, 9 (1): 35-91]), is supported by the field studies and comments of different botanists, like Chevalier (1935 [Rev. Bot. Appl. Agric. Trop. 15: 733-1.090]), Barbosa (1961), Brochmann et al. (1997), Duarte & Moreira (2002 [Garcia de Orta, Sér. Bot., 16 (1-2): 51-80]), and Lobin et al. (2005). Globally, this species is considered “Endangered (EN)” (Gomes et al. in Leyens & Lobin, 1996), and consequently in need of specific conservation measures, e.g. legal protection of new sites, creation of seed banks and wide-ranged educational programmes in local schools about the importance of the endemic plants of the Cape Verde Islands.

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Figure 1.- General view of an individual of *Sideroxylon marginata* growing on a volcanic dyke close to the path from Cachaço to Ribeira Brava (São Nicolau, Cape Verde Islands), November 2010. (Photo: R. Barone).
Figure 2.- Detail of terminal branches and leaves from the same individual of *S. marginata*. Path from Cachaço to Ribeira Brava (S. Nicolau), November 2010. (Photo: R. Barone).

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