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ORCID
MAJ: 0000-0002-6539-4149
ETT: 0000-0002-5601-540X
GAAC: 0000-0001-9405-0508

A new species of *Schlegelia* (Schlegeliaceae) from the Colombian Amazon forest

M. Alejandra Jaramillo[1,2,*], Edwin Trujillo-Trujillo[3], Gerardo A. Aymard Corredor[4]

[1] *Grupo Diversitas, Facultad de Ciencias Básicas y Aplicadas, Universidad Militar Nueva Granada, km 2 vía Cajicá-Zipaquirá, Cundinamarca, Colombia*
[2] *Negaunee Integrative Research Center, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, USA*
[3] *Grupo de Investigación en Agroecosistemas y Conservación en Bosques Amazónicos - GAIA, Laboratorio de Agrobiodiversidad y Malherbologia LAMUA, Facultad de Ingeniería, Universidad de la Amazonia, Cl. 17 Diagonal 17 con Cra. 3F, 180 002, Florencia, Caquetá, Colombia*
[4] *UNELLEZ-Guanare, Programa de Ciencias del Agro y el Mar, Herbario Universitario (PORT), Mesa de Cavacas, estado Portuguesa 3350, Venezuela*
*Corresponding author. Email: maria.jaramillo@unimilitar.edu.co

Abstract. *Schlegelia nelcyiae*, from the remnants of wet Amazonian forests in Colombia is described, illustrated, and compared with its similar species. This new species is a hemiepiphytic liana, that shares several morphological features with *S. brachyantha*. However, it can be differentiated from this species in the shape of the leaves, inflorescence type, calyx, and corolla shape, size, and color. An updated key to the species of *Schlegelia* is presented. The present contribution increases to 25 the number of *Schlegelia* species, 18 of them known from Colombia, the country with the highest diversity of the genus.

Keywords: *Schlegelia nelcyiae,* northwestern Amazon, Schlegeliaceae.

INTRODUCTION

The family Schlegeliaceae Reveal (1995: 74–75) is a small family of Lamiales, described three decades ago (Reveal 1995). It is restricted to the Neotropics, and it occurs from Mexico to Brazil (Gentry 2009; Aymard-Corredor and Jaramillo 2023). Before Schlegeliaceae was considered a formal family by Reveal (1995), A. H. Gentry had proposed the tribe *Schlegelieae* Gentry of the Bignoniaceae Juss. (1789: 137) (Gentry 1980). For this reason, the family is still included inside the Bignoniaceae in many herbaria. The tribe was suggested as it was difficult to position these genera within Bignoniaceae or Scrophulariaceae (Gentry 1980; Armstrong 1985). The family includes four genera, two of them monotypic: *Exarata* Gentry (1992: 503–507) (*E. chocoensis* A.H.Gentry), from the Chocó Region, *Synapsis* Griseb. (1866:187) (*S. ilicifolia* Griseb.) from Cuba; and two relatively larger genera: *Gibsoniothamnus* L.O.Williams

(1970:213) (ca. 10 species) distributed in Mesoamerica and the Caribbean, and *Schlegelia* Miq. (1844:785). Phylogenetic analyses confirmed that Schlegeliaceae is distinct from Bignoniaceae and Scrophulariaceae (Spangler and Olmstead 1999, Olmstead et al. 2009). Recent phylogenetic reconstruction based on chloroplast and nuclear genes places Schlegeliaceae (a) sister to Martyniaceae Horan. (1847:130) and Thomandersiaceae Sreem. (1977: 413–416) (Liu et al. 2020); (b) sister to a clade including Pedaliaceae R. Br. (1810:519), Lentibulariaceae Rich. (1808:23), Acanthaceae Juss. (1789: 102-103), Bignoniaceae and Verbenaceae J. St.-Hil. (1805:245) (BS=98, 80 cp genes, (Fonseca 2021); (c) sister to Bignoniaceae and Verbenaceae (BS=65, 410 nuclear genes, Fonseca 2021), or (d) sister to a clade including Verbenaceae, Martyniaceae and Bignoniaceae (BI=1.0, Zuntini et al. 2024). The relationships of the family are still not clear; a better sampling of Schlegeliaceae ought to shed some light on the relationships of the family and the order Lamiales.

Schlegelia comprises 25 species (including the new species described herein), as presently circumscribed in the key (Aymard Corredor and Jaramillo 2023) improved here. The genus occurs in the states of Chiapas, Oaxaca, and Veracruz in Mexico (i.e., *S. nicaraguensis* Standl.; *sensu* Villaseñor Ríos 2016), the Caribbean (i.e., *S. parasitica* [Sw.] Miers ex Griseb.), Mesoamerica, the Pacific Coast- Chocó Region, the Guayana Shield to the Amazonia of Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela; at elevations from sea level to 2100 m (Gentry 1973, 1977, 1982a, 1982b, 1997, 2001, 2009). It is recognized by its conspicuous hemiepiphytic habit, which consists of lianas climbing by adventitious roots, without tendrils (Gentry 1973, 1980). The leaves are simple, with small pseudostipules. The inflorescences are axillary racemes or terminal panicles; the calyx is cupular or irregularly lobed, the corolla is tubular, tubular-campanulate, infundibuliform-campanulate or hypocrateriform-campanulate, white, pink, red, yellow or purple, with an incompletely bilocular placenta**,** the fruit is a globose berry, up to 5 cm diameter, and it has a persistent calyx (Gentry 1980, 2009).

No complete monograph of *Schlegelia* has been completed, although the genus has been treated mainly as part of Bignoniaceae for Flora of Panama (Gentry 1973), Flora of Ecuador (Gentry 1977), Flora of Venezuela (Gentry 1982a), Flora of Veracruz (Gentry 1982b), Flora of the Venezuelan Guayana (Gentry 1997), Flora of Costa Rica (Burger and Barringer 2000), Flora de Nicaragua (Gentry 2001), Flora of Colombia (Gentry 2009) and Manual de Plantas de Costa Rica (Morales 2015). In addition, in the checklists: Checklist of the plants of the Guiana Shield (Funk et al. 2007), "Catálogo de las plantas vasculares nativas de México" (Villaseñor Ríos 2016), and "Catálogo de plantas y líquenes de Colombia" (Gradstein 2016).

The present work describes and illustrates a new species of *Schlegelia*, found in isolated populations in a highly fragmented wet Amazon forests near urban areas. Currently, the distribution of this new species is restricted to the Valparaiso and Solano municipalities, Caquetá department. However, a more detailed exploration is required in other forest remnants of neighboring municipalities where additional populations of this species may occur. The present contribution increases to 25 the number of *Schlegelia* species, 18 of them known from Colombia, the country with the highest diversity of the genus.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This work is based on morphological and herbarium studies. The species description was established on field observations (flower material was preserved in ethanol) and herbarium specimens. The taxonomic literature on *Schlegelia* was consulted, mainly the species key contained in Aymard Corredor & Jaramillo (2023). In addition, the Bignoniaceae for Flora of Venezuela (Gentry 1982a), Flora of Venezuelan Guayana (Gentry 1997), Flora of Colombia (Gentry 2009), and the *Catálogo de Plantas y Líquenes de Colombia* (Gradstein 2016) was also reviewed. We examined the online botany collections of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History (https://naturalhistory.si.edu/research/botany), and Tropicos (http://legacy.tropicos.org/Home.aspx) to update the current nomenclature and geographical information. Terminology for vegetative characters, inflorescences, flowers, and fruit morphology follows Gentry (Gentry 1977, 2009) and Font-Quer (Font-Quer 2001).

TAXONOMIC TREATMENT

Schlegelia nelcyiae M.A.Jaram., Edwin Trujillo & Aymard, **sp. nov.** (Figure 1).

Type: COLOMBIA. Caquetá, municipio de Valparaíso, vereda La Rico arriba, sobre la carretera hacia Valparaíso, 1 km antes del puente sobre el río pescado, 1° 11´ 56" N; 75° 40' 32" W, 217 m, 23 diciembre 2023 [fl]. *E. Trujillo 8399* (holotype COAH; isotypes COL, JBB, LAMUA). (Figs. 1, 2).

Diagnosis

Schlegelia nelcyiae resembles *S. brachyantha* but can be differentiated from this species by having evident

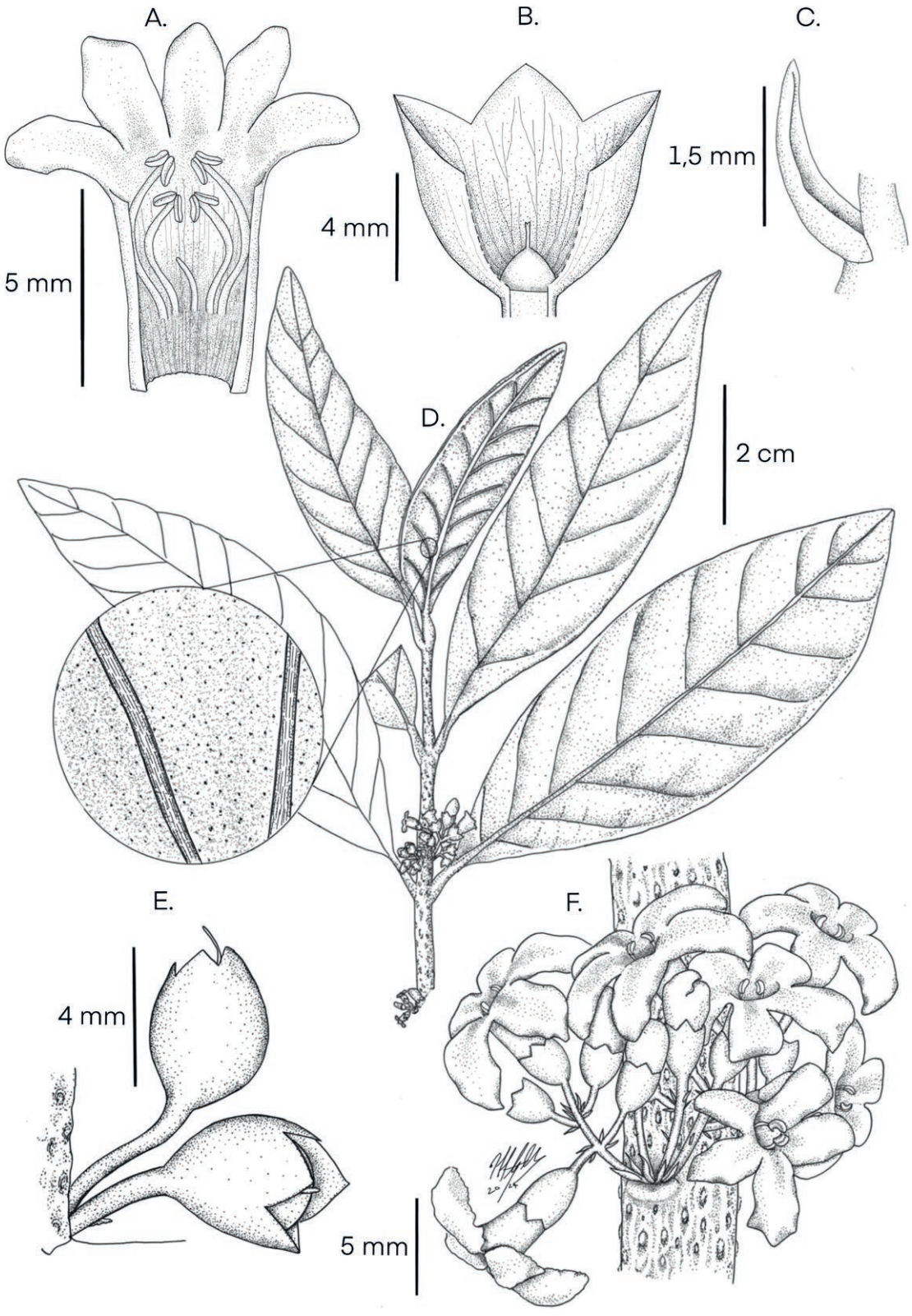

Figure 1. *Schlegelia nelcyiae* A. Open corolla showing didymanous stamens and staminode. B. Calyx open showing pistil. C. Bract at the base of inflorescence. D. Habit with detail of lower leaf surface, E. Young fruits. F. Inflorescence. Illustration by Manuela A. Sánchez Quiroga on *E. Trujillo 8399* (COAH).

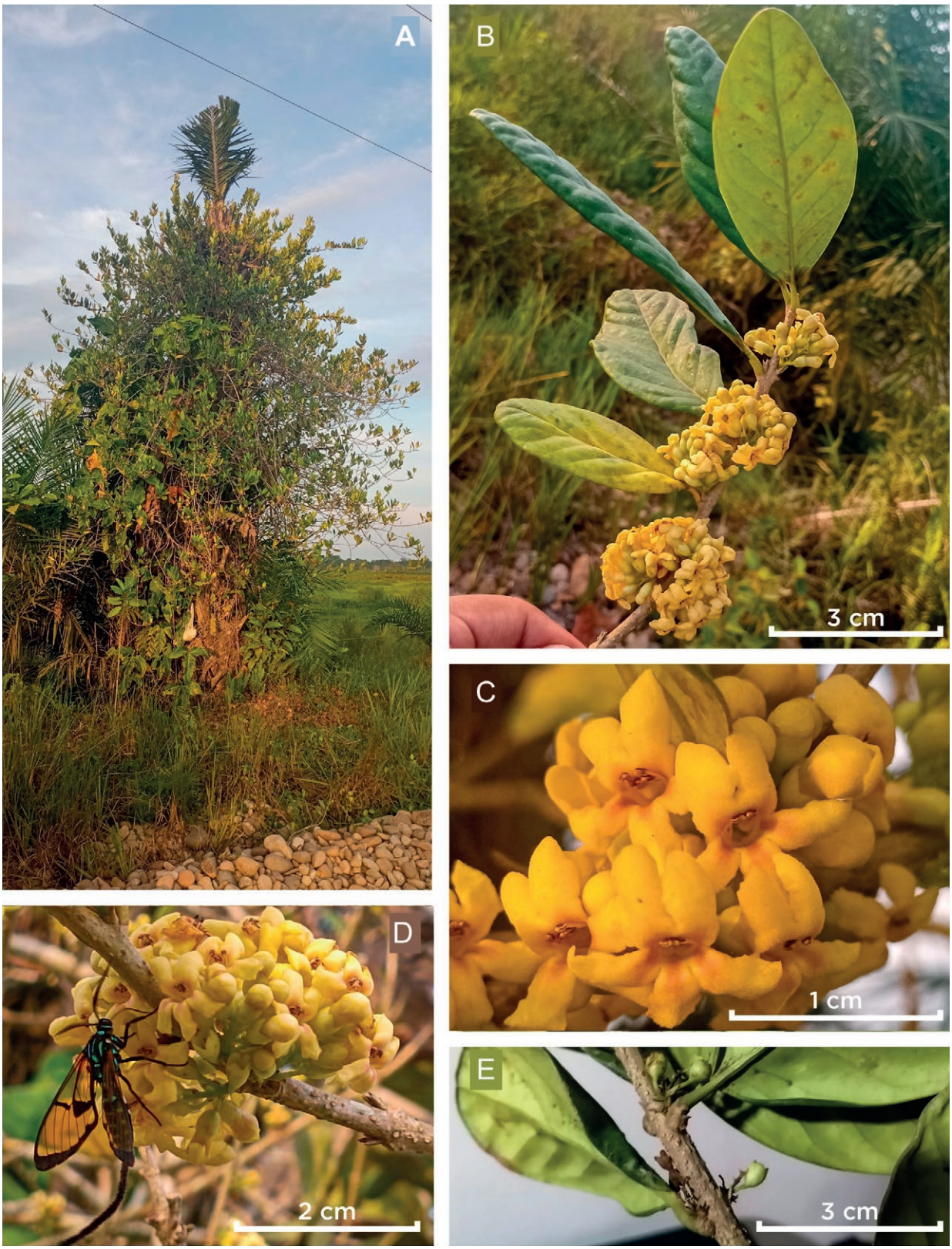

Figure 2. *Schlegelia nelcyiae*. A. Habit. B. Flowering branch. C. Detail of flowers. D. Flowers with floral visitor (Erebidae: *Trichura cerberus* (Pall., 1772). E. Fruits. Photos by Edwin Trujillo Trujillo.

pseudostipules (vs. pseudostipules not evident), leaves elliptic or elliptic-obovate (vs. ovate or ovate-oblong), inflorescence racemose (vs. fasciculate), calyx 3–4 × ca. 2 mm with acute lobes, without disk-shaped glands (vs. 3.5 × 3.5 mm, truncate, with disk-shaped glands outside), corolla 9–10 mm long, ca. 3 mm wide in the mouth, lobes ca. 5 mm, creamy turning light yellow (vs. 13–19 mm long, 5–7 mm wide in the mouth, lobes 2–3 mm long, white), nectariferous disk absent (vs. present), pistil 2 mm long (vs. 5 mm long), fruits 2.4–2.8 mm in diameter (vs. 8–10 mm).

Description

Hemiepiphytic liana, internodes 2–7 cm long, pale brown when dry, branches sparsely lenticellate. Pseudostipules lanceolate, glabrous, 5–6 mm long. Leaves simple, petioles 7–12 mm long, canaliculate, leaf blade elliptic or elliptic-obovate, 7–10 × 3–4.5 cm; coriaceous, glabrous on both surfaces, with white disk shape dots on the bellow surface (Fig. 1D), leaf base obtuse, apex acute, margin entire, pale-brown when dry. The venation is brochidodromous, with midrib prominent on the abaxial surface, 9–10 pairs of secondary veins, and the tertiary veins inconspicuous on both surfaces. Inflorescence axillary, racemose (rachis 7–12 mm in flower, 4.8–5.0 mm in fruit), rachis sparsely adpressed pubescent, subtended by 2 bracts ca. 1.5 mm long, lanceolate, glabrous on both sides, 5–8-flowered; pedicels 1–3 mm long, 1–flowered along the rachis, each flower subtended by 2 lanceolate bracteoles ca. 1 mm long (Fig. 1F). Calyx cupular**,** bilabiate, 3–4 × ca. 2 mm, 4-lobed, triangular lobes, ca. 1 mm long, apex acute, light green turning cream when live, brown when dried, glabrous, reticulate on both surfaces**.** Corolla 9–10 mm long, ca. 3 mm wide in the mouth, tube 5–7 mm long, lobes ca. 5 × 4–5 mm, campanulate with lightly reflexed lobes, puberulent, cream turning light yellow, light pink longitudinal lines around the throat; glabrous; stamens didynamous (Fig. 1A), subexserted**,** filament ca. 5 mm long**,** glabrous, inserted ca. 1 mm from base of corolla, staminode absent or present; anthers ca. 0.5 mm long, oblong, glabrous. Pistil with ca. 1 mm long, glabrous style, and conical ovary, ca. 1 × ca. 1 mm, glabrous, nectariferous disk absent. Fruit a berry, peduncle 4.8–5.4 mm long, 2.4–2.8 mm in diameter, spherical, light green, glabrous, completely covered persistent calyx in an immature state and peduncle ca. 8 mm long, ca. 7 mm in diameter, spherical, yellow, glabrous in mature state (Fig. 1E, 2B). Seeds not seen.

Etymology

Schlegelia nelcyiae is named after Mrs. Nelcy Trujillo Collazos, the mother of the second author. Mrs. N. Trujillo endured the armed conflict in the Caquetá department for many years, becoming the bastion of her family.

Distribution and habitat

The species occurs in wet forest remnants at elevations of 200 m. At the type locality, *S. nelcyiae* grows on oil palms (*Elaeis guineensis* Jacq.; Fig. 2A). Although introduced, this species has become naturalized in the region, likely due to dispersal by birds from populations in Valparaíso's urban area. These communities are found along the edges of the main road leading to Valparaíso, a region characterized by fertile plains and seasonal flooding following heavy rainfall.

Phenology

This new species was collected with flowers in December and observed with fruits in April and December.

Conservation status

This new taxon is currently known only from two collections mentioned here; therefore, it is reported here as a rare species. However, under IUCN guidelines (IUCN Standards and Petitions Committee 2022), two localities constitute a status of data deficient (DD) to determine its conservation status, especially the Area of Occupancy (AOO) and Extent of Occurrence (EOO). However, the conservation of these wet forests in this part of the Caquetá (upper basin) river in Colombia is in risk of deforestation and degradation in the last four decades (Murad and Pearse 2018).

The greatest deforestation rates have been observed since 1986 on the Amazonian foothills and central regions of Caquetá, Meta and Putumayo department, but also in the municipality of San José del Guaviare (Ruiz et al. 2011). According to RAISG report (2022), the deforestation in the Amazon Colombia region between 2001-2020 was 23.004 km^2. The area where *S. nelcyiae* occurs is not protected by any regional initiatives to conserve these very fragmented forests.

Notes

The species described here, is morphologically similar to *S. brachyantha* by its axillary inflorescence, corolla infundibuliform-campanulate or campanulate, and small fruit 0.5–2.5 cm in diameter. By its short inflorescence, *S. nelcyiae* also shows a certain resemblance with *S. parviflora*. However, this new species differs from these two taxa and the other species in the characters presented in diagnosis, and in the key to the species presented below.

Others collections

COLOMBIA. **Caquetá**. Municipio de Solano, vereda Orotuya. 00° 19´22,1" N; 74° 48' 58,5" W, 230 m, 9 diciembre 2017 [fr]. *M. Montoya, K. Vargas, J. Aldana, J. Alvarado, F. Quintero, A. Angueyra & E. Paky 4650* (COAH).

Key to the species of *Schlegelia*

Modified from Aymard Corredor and Jaramillo (2023), species indicated with an asterisk (*) are endemic to Colombia.

1. Inflorescences cauliflorous or ramiflorous 2
1. Inflorescences terminal o axillary 10
2. Corolla tubular-campanulate, > 3.5 cm long, ca. 1.1 cm wide to the mouth of the tube, purple or magenta, rarely white; lobes > 5 mm long; fruit ca. 4 cm diam. 3
2. Corolla tubular to narrowly tubular, 0.8–2.5 cm long, 0.2–0-4 cm wide to the mouth of the tube, white with apex pink, yellow, red or orange; lobes 1–4 mm long; fruit 1–1.5 cm diam. 4
3. Leaves strongly coriaceous, bullate, longer than 30 cm long; inflorescences a multifloral raceme, densely contracted, subtended by a conspicuous fascicle subtended by basal bracts..... ***S. dresslerii*** (Panamá, Colombia, Ecuador)
3. Leaves subcoriaceous or coriaceous, not bullate, 7–11 cm long; inflorescences a paucifloral raceme; not subtended by basal bracts ..... ***S. nicaraguensis*** (México, Mesoamérica, Colombia)
4. Pseudostipules present; corolla tube white (the lobes apex and calyx pink), pink or yellow; inflorescences a crowded (densely branched), a slightly contracted panicle or a subracemose..... 4
4. Pseudostipules inconspicuous or absent; corolla (tube and lobes) red, red-orange or red-purple, calyx red or brown; inflorescences a paucifloral racemes 8
5. Pseudostipules subulate 6
5. Pseudostipules lanceolate 7
6. Inflorescences a crowded densely branched panicle; corolla tube yellow; ovary lepidote ..... ***S. sulphurea*** (Panamá, Colombia, Ecuador)
6. Inflorescences a slightly contracted panicle; corolla tube white (the lobes apex and calyx pink) or pink; ovary glabrous ..... ***S. macrophylla*** (Brazil, Colombia, Perú)
7. Inflorescences a crowded panicle, densely branched; corolla tube white (the lobes apex and calyx pink), 2–2.5 cm long ..... ***S. fastigiata*** (Guatemala, Costa Rica, Panamá, Colombia, Ecuador)
7. Inflorescences subracemose; corolla tube pink, ca. 0.8 cm long ..... ***S. roseiflora*** (Brazil, French Guiana, Perú)
8. Leaves densely hirsute in the midvein and main veins on the lower surface; main veins impressed on the upper surface ..... ***S. hirsuta**** (Colombia)
8. Leaves glabrous or lepidote on the lower surface, main veins flat on the upper surface 9
9. Leaves chartaceous to subcoriaceous, elliptic to wide-elliptic, two times as long as wide, 15–26 cm long, the base auriculate, lobes rolled up; corolla tube 2–2.5 cm long, red-purple; calyx 5–7 mm long; inflorescences a simple raceme ..... ***S. spruceana*** (Brazil, Colombia, Guyana, Venezuela)
9. Leaves coriaceous, narrowly elliptic, more than two times larger than wide, 9–16 cm long, the base rounded or cuneate; corolla tube 1.8–2 cm long, red; calyx 3–5(–6) mm long; inflorescences glomerulate, with several racemes ..... ***S. cauliflora*** (Brazil, Colombia, Perú)
10. Inflorescences terminal, 14–40 cm long. 11
10. Inflorescences axillary, 0.5–21 cm long 13
11. Inflorescences with foliaceous bracts along the rachis, 1–2.5 ×1–2 cm; a biogeographical Choco species ..... ***S. darienensis*** (Colombia, Ecuador, very probably Panamá)
11. Inflorescences with obsolete bracts along the rachis, 1–2 × ca. 1 mm; Amazonian and Guayana Shield species 12
12. Calyx subtruncate, 4–5 mm long; corolla tube ca. 2 mm wide; fruit 1–1.6 cm diam., 1/3 to 1/4 covered by a persistent, subtruncate calyx ..... ***S. scandens*** (Brazil, Colombia, Perú, Suriname, Venezuela)
12. Calyx irregularly 2–3-labiate, 5–9 mm long; corolla tube ca. 3 mm wide; fruit ca. 1 cm diam. The lower 2/3 covered by a persistent, distinctly toothed calyx ..... ***S. violacea*** (Brazil, Guianas, Venezuela)
13. Fruits 3.5–5 cm in diam. 14
13. Fruit 0.5–2.5 cm in diam. 15
14. Leaves broadly obovate or rarely elliptic, coriaceous, apex rounded, base acute and decurrent on petiole, not lepidote; inflorescences 2.5–3.5 cm long, hispidulous; fruits 4.5–5 cm diam ..... ***S. macrocarpa*** (Guatemala)
14. Leaves elliptic-obovate, chartaceous or subcoriaceous, apex apiculate, base broadly cuneate; sparsely lepidote on both sides; inflorescences 1–1.2 cm long, puberulent; fruits 3.5–4 cm diam. .. ***S. nicaraguensis*** (México, Mesoamérica, Colombia)

15. Leaves panduriform (fiddle shape), the base strongly auriculate ..... .***S. pandurata*** (Colombia, Ecuador)

15. Leaves elliptic, obovate, elliptic-obovate, wide-ovate, lanceolate, oblanceolate, oblong-ovate or oblong-elliptic, the base cuneate, rounded or abrupt subcordate, slightly or not auriculate 16

16. Corolla golden yellow, lobes 1–2 mm long; calyx toothed, lobes 2–2.5 mm ..... ***S. aurea*** (Brazil)

16. Corolla white with pink tip, lilac, creamy, light-yellow, or purple, lobes 3–6 mm long; calyx truncate, subtruncate or slightly toothed, lobes 0.5–1 mm long 17

17. Inflorescences a crowded, woody contracted panicle, densely branched, the branchlets short and conspicuously jointed ..... ***S. sulphurea*** (Panamá, Colombia, Ecuador)

17. Inflorescences not-woody panicles, racemes or axillary fascicles-1-several flowers 18

18. Inflorescences fasciculate or very short racemose; corolla infundibuliform-campanulate or campanulate, 3–6 mm wide toward the mouth 19

18. Inflorescences contracted or elongate panicle, racemose-to narrowly paniculate, more or less fasciculate (*S. parviflora*) or an open raceme; corolla campanulate-hypocrateriform or tubular, 4–5 mm wide toward the mount 24

19. Leaves widely-obovate or widely elliptic; corolla tube 0.6–0.8 cm long ..... ***S. axillaris*** (Antilles)

19. Leaves elliptic, elliptic-oblong, elliptic-obovate, ovate, ovate-oblong or obovate; inflorescences fasciculate or a very shortly raceme; corolla tube 1–3.5 cm long 20

20. Leaves 4–10 cm long, elliptic, elliptic-obovate, ovate or ovate-oblong; corolla 1.0–1.9 cm long 21

20. Leaves 7.5–20 cm long, elliptic, oblong or elliptic-oblong; corolla 2.5–3.5 cm long 22

21. Leaves 4–7 cm long, ovate or ovate-oblong; inflorescence fasciculate; corolla 1,3–1.9 cm long, infundibuliform-campanulate ..***S. brachyantha*** (Antilles, Colombia, Costa Rica, Panamá, Venezuela)

21. Leaves 7–10 cm long, elliptic, elliptic-obovate; inflorescence racemose; corolla 1.0–1.1 cm long, corolla infundibuliform-campanulate or campanulate .....***S. nelcyiae**** (Colombia)

22. Leaves coriaceous; calyx tubulose-campanulate, ca. 1 cm long, green; corolla ca. 3.5 cm long ....***S. paraensis*** (Brazil, Guianas, Venezuela)

22. Leaves chartaceous; calyx campanulate, 0.4–0.5 cm long, violet; corolla 2.5–3 cm long ..... ***S. parasitica*** (Antilles)

23. Young branches with conspicuous and dense raised lenticels; base of leaves abrupt truncate or subcordate; petioles stout, 0.5–1.3 cm long; corolla 1.2–1.3 cm long, white, the throat yellow ..... ***S. chocoensis*** (Colombia, Ecuador, very probably Panamá)

23. Young branches with inconspicuous to sparsely lenticels; base of leaves rounded, cuneate or more or less cuneate; petioles slight, 1–2.5 cm long; corolla not longer than 1.2 cm, white or lilac or lavender, the throat lilac or lavender.. 24

24. Leaves 13–30 cm long; inflorescences a contracted panicle, the main axis little developed, 1–(4)–5 cm long 25

24. Leaves 4–22 cm long; inflorescences racemose-paniculate or an open raceme, the main axis well developed, (4)–18 cm long 26

25. Inflorescences a slightly contracted panicle; peduncle and pedicel stout and woody ....***S. macrophylla*** (Brazil, Colombia, Perú)

25. Inflorescences a contracted panicle, almost often fasciculate; peduncle and pedicel slight and herbaceous ....***S. parviflora*** (México, Mesoamérica, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Perú, Venezuela)

26. Leaves widely-elliptic to elliptic or oblanceolate, brown when dry; inflorescences 1–(4)–5 cm long, racemose or narrowly subpaniculate, calyx black when dried ....***S. fuscata*** (Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panamá, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Venezuela)

26. Leaves lanceolate, lanceolate-elliptic, elliptic, rarely narrowly ovate or oblanceolate, black-brown or yellowish when dry; inflorescences 4–18 cm long, racemose-paniculate to narrowly paniculate; calyx brown to yellowish when dried 27

27. Leaves lanceolate, lanceolate-elliptic, coriaceous, glabrescent or with simple trichomes and without shape-plates glands on the lower surface, black-brown when dry; inflorescences raquis puberulent to sparsely pilose; bracts 2–5 mm long, oblong, ciliate along the margins, calyx sparsely puberulent outside, brown when dry; staminode absent ....***S. longirachis*** (Colombia)

27. Leaves elliptic, oblanceolate, rarely narrowly ovate, rigid-coriaceous, with lepidote trichomes and shape-plates glands located near base of midrib on the lower surface, yellowish when dry; inflorescences rachis densely hirsute-puberulent, bracts 1–2 mm long, triangular, , short-puberulous along the margins, calyx lepidote or subpuberulous at least at the base, yellowish when dry; staminode present .....***S. monachinoi*** (Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela)

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