

THE TOGO FLORA PROJECT

The Flora of Togo Project, aiming at the publication of a manual in French on the flowering plant species of Togo, was initiated at the Botanic Museum, Berlin-Dahlem, West Germany, in 1972. It is now nearing completion and the manuscript will go to the press in the near future. The editors are indebted to many persons, both living and deceased, from various countries, who have furthered this Project by collecting plants and by contributing valuable treatments.

The first botanical explorations in Togo were undertaken by army officers, resident collectors and expeditions during the German colonial period from 1884–1914. Engler (1911) presented their results in a rather detailed synthesis. In later years it was mainly French botanists who enlarged our knowledge of the flora of Togo. When the Republic of Togo reached independence in 1966, botanical field work was much intensified. Since 1972 a close cooperation has been established in this regard between the Bénin University in Lomé, the Service

de la Protection des Végétaux in Lomé-Cacaveli and the Botanical Museum, Berlin-Dahlem.

The number of plant specimens gathered in Togo during the last ten years exceeds 10 000. To these, 5 000–6 000 brought together in earlier days (Urban, 1917; Hepper & Neate, 1971), may be added. These figures indicate a high level of floristic investigation, which is confirmed by the ratio of specimens to species numbers. The number of species recorded in the Flora of West Tropical Africa (FWTA) in the seven major families (Hepper, 1965, 1972) is approximately three times that which is presently known for Togo (Table 1); by extrapolating the total figure from FWTA (7 037 flowering plant species) one arrives at an estimate of 2 300 species for the flora of Togo (taking into account some distortions, a figure of barely 2 000 species is even more realistic). This means, by definition (Hepper, 1979), that Togo now belongs to the 'well-known' areas of Africa, because 'more than three times as many specimens as species have been collected'.

TABLE 1.—Comparative species numbers for the seven major flowering plant families in Togo (56 600 sq km) and West Africa (4 508 000 sq km)

Family	W. Africa FWTA (1954–72)	Togo Engler (1911)	Togo FWTA	Togo presently known
Leguminosae	728	79	103	297
Gramineae	615	52	110	249
Rubiaceae	559	45	42	129
Orchidaceae	403	8	16	76
Cyperaceae	314	36	64	145
Compositae	293	18	25	95
Euphorbiaceae	275	20	43	89
Total	3 187	258	403	1 080

Recent collections have led to some additions to the 'Flora of West Tropical Africa', in particular and most importantly, to the description of eight new species: *Anadelphia liebighiana* H. Scholz, *Digitaria ursulae* H. Scholz, *Osbeckia togoensis* Leuenberger, *Phyllanthus gagnioevae* Brunel & Roux, *P. magnificens* Brunel & Roux, *P. rouxii* Brunel, *Pseudovigna puerarioides* Ern, and *Schoenoplectus raynalianus* U. Scholz.

The Flora of Togo Manual, which is to be supplemented by a separate, illustrated volume for the Glumiflorae (*Gramineae*, *Cyperaceae*), will include keys for determination, full citation of known herbarium specimens, and an indication of the distribution within five main phytogeographical subdivisions. Data from the literature are also incorporated completely, even though in some cases it has not been possible to trace and revise the corresponding specimens, many of the older ones being buried in large collections or having been destroyed in World War II. Such unavoidable shortcomings and others that one may detect, will hopefully contribute to stimulate further research.

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