

# The Flora of Santo

## SOME NEW, CHARACTERISTIC OR REMARKABLE SPECIES

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The recent botanical inventory work done on Santo has brought to light a number of previously undiscovered taxa. These include two new species of *Schefflera* (see "Focus on Araliaceae") and probable novelties in the following genera: *Alangium* (Alangiaceae), *Alphitonia* (Rhamnaceae), *Citronella* (Cardiopteridaceae), *Cyrtandra* (Gesneriaceae), *Elaeocarpus* (Elaeocarpaceae), *Eugenia* (Myrtaceae), *Ficus* (Moraceae), *Freycinetia* (Pandanaceae), *Ilex* (Aquifoliaceae), *Parsonsia* (Apocynaceae), *Sciaphila* (Triuridaceae), *Semecarpus* (Anacardiaceae), *Tapeinosperma* (Myrsinaceae), *Terminalia* (Combretaceae), and in three genera of Rubiaceae (*Guettardella*, *Ixora* and *Psychotria*), all of which are now in various stages of closer study or preparation for publication. Some of these potential novelties are discussed in more detail below.

### ... *Alangium*

Prior to the Santo 2006 expedition, one member of this genus, *A. vitiense*, had been reported from Vanuatu by Guillaumin, although Smith, in his *Flora Vitiensis Nova*, later indicated that this species was restricted to Fiji and that Guillaumin's identification was incorrect. The original description of *A. vitiense* indeed refers to a plant that differs from the material collected on Santo (Fig. 96), whose calyx has long teeth and whose leaves have evident domatia and a very acuminate apex. Moreover, the species of *Alangium* occurring in Vanuatu does not match anything from New Caledonia, and thus appears to be new.



Figure 96: Flowers of a probably new species of *Alangium*.

### ... *Cyrtandra*

We identified several species of this genus on Santo: *C. efatensis*, *C. vesiculata*, *C. neohebridensis* and *C. schizocalyx*. Several specimens couldn't be related to any of these species (Fig. 97), so we suspect novelties in the genus.

### ... *Elaeocarpus*

Four species were observed during the mission, *E. floridanus*, *E. hortensis*, *E. hebridarum* (this latter considered by some authors as conspecific with *E. angustifolius*), and an unidentified taxon (Fig. 98), which might be new.



Figure 97: Flowers of a *Cyrtandra* species, which is suspected as being undescribed.



Figure 98: A species of *Elaeocarpus* in fruit, which might represent a novelty.

### • • • **Gmelina**

A tree belonging to this genus was collected in the Penaoru valley, representing the first record ever from Vanuatu. The plant on Santo appears to be close to *Gmelina vitiensis* from Fiji, but it is not identical, differing in several characters, which suggests that it may be a new species.

### • • • **Parsonsia**

Several lianescent genera of Apocynaceae were collected, including *Alyxia* and *Hoya*, and the specimens are thought to be closely comparable to already described species. However, a liana collected at 1200 m (Fig. 99) in dense primary forest was with difficulty assigned to *Parsonsia* cf. *laevis*, and this plant might be new and in need of description.

### • • • **Sciaphila**

This genus in the family Triuridaceae was previously unknown from Santo, although one species, *S. aneityensis*, had been recorded elsewhere in the archipelago. Material of two distinct species was collected during the Santo 2006 expedition, one of which appears to be new to science.



Photo P. Lowry

Figure 99: A liana belonging to family Apocynaceae, initially identified as *Parsonsia* cf. *laevis* with doubt, might be a novelty.