

## A REMARKABLE RANGE EXTENSION FOR *SCLERIA* *CYPERINA* KUNTH

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Members of the distinctive section *Hymenolytrum* of the genus *Scleria* are chiefly found in savannas, campos, llanos, forest openings and alpine meadows in the northern South American countries of Colombia, Venezuela, British Guiana, Dutch Guiana, French Guiana and Brazil. This section includes *S. cyperina* Kunth, *S. stipularis* Nees, *S. ramosa* Clarke, *S. violacea* Pilger, *S. macrogyne* Clarke, *S. comosa* (Nees) Steud., *S. cyperinoides* Clarke, *S. grandis* Core, *S. tepuiensis* Core. These nine species have tall stems and broad leaves, with the very numerous spikelets densely clustered in pyramidal panicles. The pistillate spikelets are lowest in each branch, sessile, one-flowered, the staminate on distinct long peduncles. Most species of the section have the contraligule terminated by an elongated scarious appendage. Some of the species, e. g. *S. tepuiensis*, are found in paramos or alpine meadows on the summits of flat-topped mountains (*tepuis*) such as Mt. Duida, Mt. Roraima, Mt. Sipapo, and so on.

The grasslands (savannas or llanos) of the Orinoco basin have a hot, sweltering climate, with an alternation of pronounced wet dry seasons. The atmospheric humidity is fairly high and rain is not entirely lacking at any time of the year, although irregular severe droughts are not unknown. The vegetation is that of a vest savanna checkered by the fringes of forests along the rivers. Tall tufts of grasses are mingled with tuberous and perennial herbs and evergreen shrubs. Columnar palms are interspersed and isolated clumps of short gnarled trees form landmarks.

Low marshy land is frequent, overgrown with tall sedges. One of the common species, in places the most abundant, is *S. cyperina*. This species is easily separated from most other members of the section because the contraligule lacks the distinctive elongated scarious appendage. The type locality was at Cumana, Venezuela, where it was first collected by Humboldt. It ranges from eastern Colombia through the Guianas and into the Northern Amazon Valley of Brazil.

Recently, in going through some unnamed collections of Henry K. Svenson from Nicaragua, we found two specimens of *S. cyperina*, the first known from Central America. The first of these, *Svenson*

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4498, was collected in a "damp savanna" at Puerto Cabezas, in the departament of Zelaya, March 11, 1971. The second, *Svenson 4776*, was from Puente Pozo Azul along Kornuk Creek near Bilwaskarma, in the Comarca del Cabo, March 14, 1971, with the note that it was the "predominant sedge of the savannas".

More recently, in going over some unnamed sedges from the Field Museum of Natural History we came across another specimen of *S. cyperina* from near Cabo Gracias a Dios, 15 kilometers southwest of Waspam, collected in "wet open pineland", March 7, 1961 by *Bunting Licht 435*.

These collections of a species apparently abundant in northeastern Nicaragua represent a range extension of than 800 air-line miles from the next nearest known station, in northern South America.