

A New *Zamia* species from the Orinoquía region of Colombia

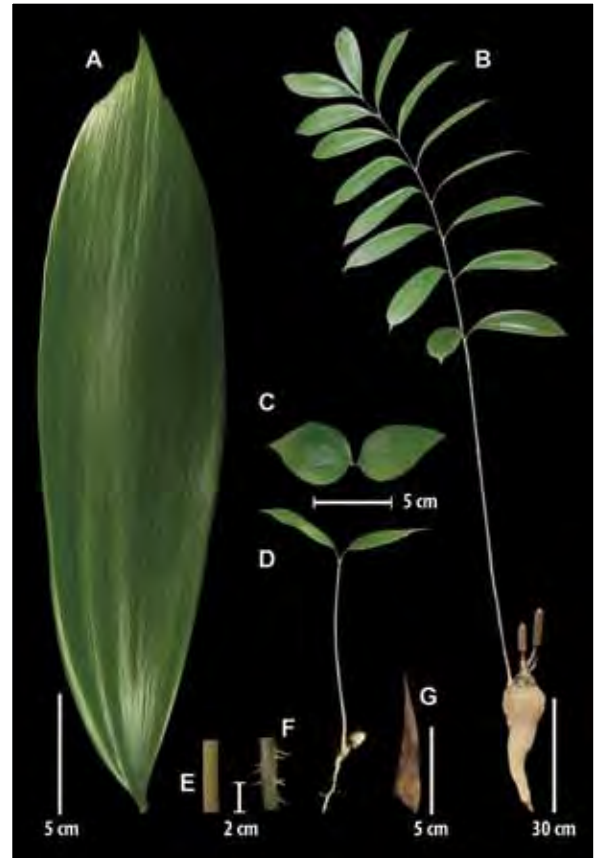
Zamia muricata was described in 1806 by German botanist Carl Ludwig Willdenow based on material collected by Alexander von Humboldt in Puerto Cabello, Venezuela. It was the first South American species of *Zamia* to be described, and plants from Venezuela are relatively common in cultivation, as the species has been in cultivation for centuries. Other plants assigned to this species occurring in the Orinoquía region of neighboring Colombia had been rarely collected and remained enigmatic for decades due to a paucity of fertile specimen collections and a lack of targeted field research. Fortunately, the recent discovery of viable *Zamia* populations in the Orinoquía region in the Colombian department of Cundinamarca by researchers



Phytotaxa cover featuring *Z. orinoquiensis*.

of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia allowed us to study these plants in detail and to compare them to Venezuelan populations of *Z. muricata*. This fieldwork, undertaken in collaboration with researchers from multiple Colombian and Venezuelan institutions (Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Sociedad Colombiana de Cycadas, Universidad de Antioquia, and PORT herbarium), allowed us to determine these plants were morphologically distinct from *Z. muricata*. These plants are in fact a new species that we described and named *Z. orinoquiensis* in reference to the Orinoquía region of Colombia where this species exclusively occurs. The paper describing this species and clarifying the circumscription of *Z. muricata* was published in the journal PHYTOTAXA where it is freely available to download (biotaxa.org).

Michael Calonje, MBC Cycad Biologist
michaelc@montgomerybotanical.org



Cristina Lopez-Gallego and Michael Calonje with *Z. orinoquiensis*.