

Rubiaceae family: Flora Argentina, history and evolution

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The Rubiaceae family in Argentina is represented by 41 genera and 146 species, of which 9 spp., 2 subspp., and 1 variety are endemic. The highest concentration and endemism are found in the NE of the country, in savannas, rainforests, riverside forests, followed by the NW of Argentina, from sea level to 1000–4000 m in the Andes. They also inhabit the heterogeneous landscape of the Center Region of the country, and few species grow in the Patagonian zone. This work is the contribution to the integral study of the Flora of our country. The beginning of knowledge of Argentina's vegetation dates back to the mid 19th century, with foreign naturalists attracted by the virgin vegetation of the country. The Academy of Science and the first Institute of Botany were founded in Córdoba, where the herbarium and methodical study of native plants began. The first floristic works were carried out, which were enriched in the 20th century, with the improvement of instruments, development of new methods, which changed the analysis and interpretation of data. Fast means of transportation and communication facilitated the exchange of ideas and the increase in botanical expeditions. Despite the advances in the local botany, a comprehensive work on the country's flora was still missing. It began with species checklists, regional catalogues and flora from various provinces. At the Instituto Botánica Darwinion (IBODA), the project "Flora Argentina" began methodically with the hand-picking of species bibliography, collection and identification activities. Professor Nélica Bacigalupo began to work there in 1949. She worked for more than 60 years and her publications about Rubiaceae taxa were the first in the country. When we met her, we had the privilege of valuing her predisposition and her wisdom as "Teacher", which led to the transfer of her knowledge to three generations, for which we express our appreciation and gratitude.