

Petenaeaceae - a new family of flowering plants

17 March 2011



Petenaea cordata (Image: M. Vorontsova)

(PhysOrg.com) -- A new family of flowering plants has been described to accommodate *Petenaea cordata*, a species of uncertain affinities.

Petenaea cordata, a species from northern Central America, has been included in Elaeocarpaceae and Tiliaceae, but its familial placement has been uncertain. It was considered a taxon incertae sedis by the Angiosperm Phylogeny Group (APG III).

Molecular phylogenetic analyses based on a recent collection made in Guatemala revealed a distant sister-group relationship to the African [genus](#) *Gerrardina* (Gerrardinaceae, Huerteales). However, a comparison of morphological and anatomical characters did not identify any obvious synapomorphies for *Gerrardina* and *Petenaea*, and a new monotypic family, *Petenaeaceae*, has been described in a paper in the *Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society* by scientists from the Natural History Museum, Kew and the University of San Carlos de [Guatemala](#).

The polymorphic order Huerteales now comprises four small families, *Dipentodontaceae*, *Gerrardinaceae*, *Petenaeaceae* and *Tapisciaceae*.

Provided by Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

APA citation: Petenaeaceae - a new family of flowering plants (2011, March 17) retrieved 13 November 2019 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-03-petenaeaceae-family.html>

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