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First Record for Northeastern Brazil of *Pseudobombax petropolitanum* (Malvaceae), an Atlantic Forest Rupicolous Species Overlooked for Over a Century

Primeiro Registro para o Nordeste do Brasil de Pseudobombax petropolitanum *(Malvaceae), uma Espécie Rupícola da Mata Atlântica Despercebida por Mais de um Século*

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Palavras-chave
afloramentos rochosos granítico-gnáissicos, endemismo, inselbergues, Mata Atlântica do Sul da Bahia

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Abstract

Pseudobombax petropolitanum first appeared in literature in the year 1905 as *Pachira petropolitana* Glaziou (*nomen nudum*) based on a single collection with only leaves and flower buds, and was largely overlooked in literature and herbaria for over a century. During fieldwork in the Atlantic Forest from southern Bahia, individuals of *P. petropolitanum* were discovered inhabiting rock outcrops (inselbergs), representing the first occurrence in northeastern Brazil. In this work, we provide a phenologically complete morphological description of *P. petropolitanum*, designate an epitype to permit a precise application of the name, and provide field photographs of vegetative, floral, fruit, and seed characters. We also present a distribution map, comments on taxonomic and ecological affinities with related species from the Atlantic Forest, and conservation notes on Atlantic Forest inselbergs from Bahia.

Resumo

Pseudobombax petropolitanum *apareceu pela primeira vez na literatura em 1905 como* Pachira petropolitana *Glaziou (*nomen nudum*) baseado em um único espécime com apenas folhas e botões florais e foi amplamente negligenciada na literatura e em herbários por mais de um século. Com base em trabalho de campo na Mata Atlântica do sul da Bahia, indivíduos de* P. petropolitanum *foram descobertos em afloramentos rochosos (inselbergues) e representam o primeiro registro para o nordeste do Brasil. Neste trabalho fornecemos uma descrição fenologicamente completa de* P. petropolitanum*, designamos um epítipo para permitir a aplicação precisa do nome e apresentamos fotografias de caracteres vegetativos, de flores, frutos e sementes. Além disso, fornecemos um mapa de distribuição, discutimos as suas afinidades ecológicas e taxonômicas com espécies da Mata Atlântica, e comentários sobre a conservação dos inselbergues da Mata Atlântica da Bahia.*

Introduction

Pseudobombax petropolitanum A.Robyns (Malvaceae) first appeared in literature in 1905 as *Pachira petropolitana* Glaziou (Glaziou, 1905), a nomen nudum. The name was validly published in *Pseudobombax* Dugand by Robyns (1963), who, however, described the species based only a single collection from Petrópolis (Rio de Janeiro), despite the existence of herbarium specimens collected in 1942 and 1958 in the Atlantic Forest rock outcrops in the neighboring States of Espírito Santo (*E.A. Bueno 113, R37518*) and Minas Gerais (*G. Mendes-Magalhães 14160, R112136*), respectively. The type, deposited at P herbarium, has 5-foliolate leaves, one young flower bud, and no fruit or seed.

Pseudobombax petropolitanum has been later collected in Minas Gerais in 1965 (*J.P. Lanna Sobrinho 1123, R128592*), typically over rock outcrops and again in Petrópolis in 1977 (*G. Martinelli 2554, RB197576*). However, these collections remained unidentified or misidentified and so

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the species did not appear in a taxonomic survey for Rio de Janeiro (Santos, 1966) nor in the list of *Pseudobombax* for Brazil (Duarte, 2010), thus remaining overlooked for over a century. *Pseudobombax petropolitanum* was considered endemic to Rio de Janeiro by Forzza et al. (2010) and in 2011 the name *P. petropolitanum* was assigned to an herbarium specimen other than the type collection (CRIA, 2025) as a result of long-term systematic and taxonomic studies in *Pseudobombax* and allied genera (see Carvalho-Sobrinho & Queiroz, 2009, 2010, 2011; Carvalho-Sobrinho et al., 2013a,b; Carvalho-Sobrinho et al., 2014; Carvalho-Sobrinho & Dorr, 2017; Carvalho-Sobrinho et al., 2024). Later, the species was reported for Espírito Santo, Minas Gerais, and Rio de Janeiro (Carvalho-Sobrinho & Yoshikawa, 2020) and categorized as Endangered (Fernandez & Moraes, 2019).

In June 2023, *Pseudobombax petropolitanum* was found in granitic -gneissic rock outcrops (hereafter "inselbergs") in the municipality of Guaratinga, in southern Atlantic Forest of Bahia State, in a priority area classified as 'extremely important' for conservation of Brazilian biodiversity (Martinelli, 2007), but poorly botanized. The discovery represents the first occurrence of *P. petropolitanum* for northeastern Brazil and the northernmost record for the species along with one record from Minas Gerais. A phenologically complete morphological description of *P. petropolitanum* is here provided and an epitype is designated to permit a precise application of the name. We also provide an updated distribution map, field photographs, discussion on ecological and taxonomical affinities to related taxa in the Atlantic Forest, and conservation notes on Atlantic Forest inselbergs from Bahia.

Material and Methods

Data Collection and Geographic Distribution

This study was based on extensive fieldwork in eastern Brazil and examination *in loco* of Brazilian herbaria (ALCB, BHCB, CEPEC, CVRD, HRB, HUEFS, HVASF, IBGE, INPA, IPA, MBM, MBML, R, RB, SP, SPF, UB, UEC, UFP, UFRPE, VIC) and international herbaria (F, G, K, M, MO, NY, P, US, WIS) as part of taxonomic studies in *Pseudobombax* and allied genera. The geographic distribution map was prepared using free and open source QGIS Software version 3.40.3 and georeferenced specimen data retrieved from online data platforms (CRIA, 2025; Reflora, 2025). The specimens were selected in order to encompass morphological variation as well as altitudinal, latitudinal and longitudinal range of *Pseudobombax petropolitanum*.

Study Area

Pseudobombax petropolitanum was found inhabiting inselbergs in the municipality of Guaratinga, in southern Bahian Atlantic Forest that is known for its high plant diversity and endemism (Mori et al., 1983; Thomas et al., 1998; Amorim et al., 2005, 2008, 2009; Martini et al., 2007; Murray-Smith et al., 2009; Ostroski et al., 2020). The region has been subject to extensive loss of habitat mainly due to the establishment of pastures for cattle and *Eucalyptus* cultivation (Ribeiro et al., 2009) and remaining vegetation is mainly situated in mountain areas that often include inselbergs at summits (Queiroz et al., 1996; Amorim & Matos, 2009; Amorim et al., 2009). The inselbergs vegetation differ from the surrounding forest matrix in the edaphic-climatic characteristics and present many endemics (Porembski et al., 1998; Porembski, 2007; Paula et al., 2016).

The Guaratinga area presents abundant and prominent inselbergs in a very anthropized landscape originally covered with semideciduous forest (Figure 1) characterized by the presence of species such as *Anemia villosa* Humb. & Bonpl. ex Willd., *Cnidoscolus oligandrus* (Müll.Arg.) Pax, *Conchocarpus longifolius* (A. St.-Hil.) Kallunki & Pirani, *Genipa infundibuliformis* Zappi & Semir, *Handroanthus chrysotrichus* (Mart. ex DC.) Mattos, and *Philodendron edmundoi* G.M.Barroso.

The local rupicolous flora (Figure 2) includes *Alcantarea cerosa* Leme, A.P.Fontana & O.B.C.Ribeiro, *Paliavana tenuiflora* Mansf.,

Figure 1

Aspect of the Inselberg in Anthropized Landscape with Semideciduous Forest Remnants and Cattle Pastures in the Municipality of Guaratinga, in Southern Bahia Atlantic Forest, where Pseudobombax petropolitanum *was Discovered. Photo: Aline Mota*



Pilosocereus brasiliensis subsp. ruschianus (Buining & Brederoo) Zappi, *Syagrus guaratingensis* Noblick, *Vellozia candida* J.C.Mikan, the Bahian endemics *Aechmea guaratingensis* Leme & L.Kollmann, *Begonia goldingiana* L.Kollmann & A.P.Fontana, and *Orthophytum guaratingense* Leme & L.Kollmann, and the threatened with extinction *Cattleya grandis* (Lindl.) A.A.Chadwick, *Coleocephalocereus buxbaumianus* Buining and *Merianthera pulchra* Kuhlm.

Taxonomic Treatment

Pseudobombax petropolitanum A.Robyns, Bull. Jard. Bot. État Bruxelles 33: 83. 1963.

Figures 2–4.

Holotype: **BRAZIL**, **Rio de Janeiro**, Petrópolis, 30/V/1879, lf., fl. buds, *A.F.M. Glaziou 10309* (P barcode 00852563; isotype: K913918). Epitype (here designated): **BRAZIL**, **Rio de Janeiro**, Petrópolis, estrada para o Vale das Videiras, entrada do Parque Municipal da Ponte funda, 22°25'40"S, 43°16'51"W, 1100 m alt., 03/VIII/2011, fl., fr., *J.G. Carvalho-Sobrinho & A.C. Mota 3193* (HUEFS barcode 000143754!)

Rupicolous trees to 10 m tall, deciduous, underground xylopodium-like organs often present; eophylls (i.e., first leaves produced by seedlings) 1–3-foliolate; barks grayish without greenish underbark longitudinal stripes; branches often corky and covered with whitish wax at the ends; stipules caducous. Leaves 3–5(6)-foliolate, clustered at apex of the branches; petioles 80–110 mm long, glabrous, swollen at base when fresh, petiolules (7–)10–33 mm long; leaflets 100–180(260) × 35–85(130) mm, chartaceous, glabrous on both surfaces, slightly discolor, elliptic, large-elliptic to ovate, rarely oblong-elliptic, base obtuse, truncate or slightly cordate, apex acute to obtuse, mucronate or not, margin entire. Inflorescences axillar, composed of solitary flowers, rarely in 2-flowered cymes. Pedicels up to 65 mm long, glabrous, often with sparse glands. Flowers 13–14 cm long, receptacles with c. 15 glands, pinkish to reddish when fresh, in one or two superposed whorls; calyces 10–18 × 20–28 mm, fleshy, cupuliform, apex truncate, externally glabrous, green, rarely purplish, internally sericeous except the base; petals 80–90 × 24–28 mm, linear-lanceolate, internally whitish, externally greenish to nigrescent; stamens white, phalanges absent, staminal tube 13–15 mm long, glabrous; ovary conical to oblong, 5-angulate, glabrous

Figure 2

Inselberg Vegetation in the Municipality Guaratinga, in Southern Bahia Atlantic Forest, Evidencing a Tree Individual (Circled) of Pseudobombax petropolitanum *(Malvaceae). Photo: Aline Mota*



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except for peltate microtrichomes. Capsules 80–150 mm long, oblongoid, 5-angulate to slightly 5-costate, externally brown, glabrous; kapok brown, columella persistent, entire. Seeds subglobose to pyriform, 5–6 mm long, maculate.

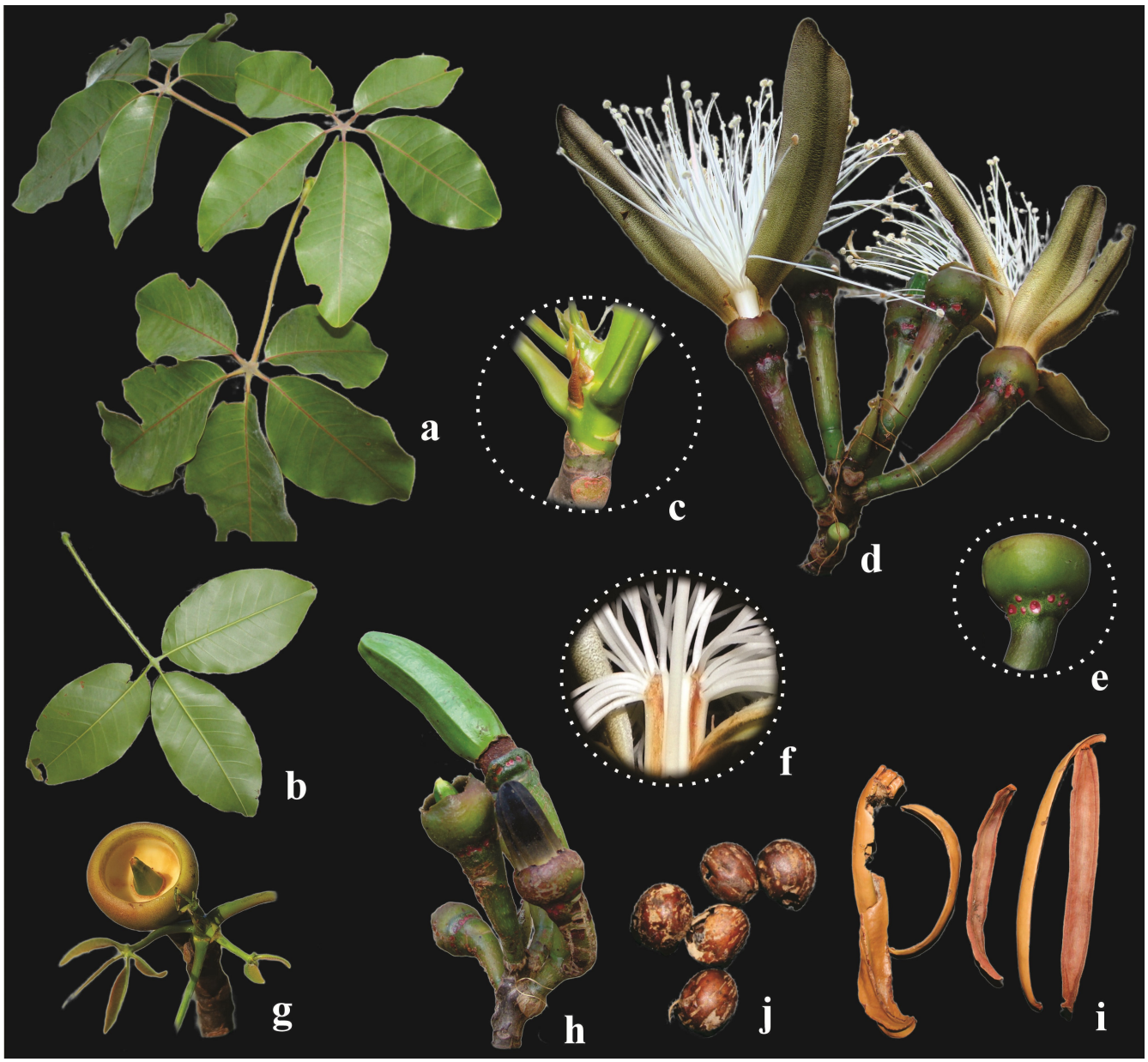
New occurrence: **BRAZIL. Bahia**: Guaratinga, 15 km de Guaratinga na estrada para São João do Sul, 16°32'17.87", 39° 54'3.67", 330 m alt., 03/XI/2023, lf., fl., fr., *J.G. Carvalho-Sobrinho & A.C. Mota 4030* (HUEFS barcode 000100285702).

Observed (non-vouchered) occurrences: **BRAZIL. Bahia**: Guaratinga, 09/VI/2023, 16°37'24"S, 40°04'14"W, 450 m alt., lf., *J.G. Carvalho-Sobrinho* obs.; 02/IV/2024, 16°36'21", 40°00'26", 300 m alt., lf., *A.C. Mota* obs.

Additional specimens examined

BRAZIL. Espírito Santo: Afonso Cláudio, 20°04'S, 41° 02'W, 1050 m alt., 16/VIII/1990, lf., fl., fr., *H. Boudet Fernandes*

Figure 3
Pseudobombax petropolitanum *A.Robyns*



Note. (a) five-foliate leaves. (b) three-foliate leaves. (c) young shoot with stipules and clustered, pulvinate leaves. (d) leafless flowering branch. (e) cupuliform calyx and receptacle glands. (f) staminal tube in longitudinal section. (g) truncate, fleshy calyx and 5-angulate ovary. (h) young flower bud and immature, 5-angulate capsule. (i) mature capsule (on the left) and separate, woody valves. (j) maculate seeds. a–c, e, g, i–j: from *Carvalho-Sobrinho 4030*; d, f, h: from the epitype *Carvalho-Sobrinho 3193*. Photos: Jefferson Carvalho-Sobrinho.

3007 (MBML barcode 00012060; HUEFS barcode 000142253; HUFSJ11016; HVASF barcode 16649). Águia Branca, 19°01'25"S, 40°38'41"W, 260 m alt., 15/VII/2011, lf., fl., *J.G. Carvalho-Sobrinho 3174* (HUEFS barcode 000145061). Alegre, 20°41'11"S, 41° 28'10"W, 679 m alt., 16/VII/2018, fl., *H.V. Pinto Junior 460* (VIC052629). Colatina, 19°20'37"S, 40°33'08"W, 550 m alt., 11/ IX/2007, lf., fr., *R.R. Vervloet 3402* (MBML barcode 00012064). Ecoporanga, 18°17'34"S, 40°44'55"W, 280 m alt., 11/IX/2009, fl., fr., *L. Kollmann 11796* (MBML39401). Ibitirama, 20°23'42"S, 41° 44'06"W, 1100 m alt., 15/V/2011, lf., *J.G. Carvalho-Sobrinho 3081* (HUEFS barcode 143646). Jaguaré, 18°53'12"S, 40°12'02"W, 125 m alt., 20/VIII/2014, lf., fl., fr., *G. Siqueira 979* (CVRD14977; HUEFS barcodes 000136920, 000136884). Mimoso do Sul, 20° 56'S, 41°32'W, 780 m alt., 14/V/2011, lf., *J.G. Carvalho-Sobrinho 3080* (HUEFS barcode 249041). Nova Venécia, 18°37'S, 40°43'W, 200 m alt., 08/VIII/1989, lf., fl., fr., *H. Boudet Fernandes 2822* (HUEFS barcode 000140357; MBML barcodes 00012062, 00012063; R186853). Pancas, 11 July 1942, fl., *E.A. Bueno 113* (R37518). Santa Teresa, 19°58'17"S, 40°31'49"W, 600 m alt., 25/ VII/1986, lf., fl., *G. Martinelli 11603* (MBML barcodes 00020028, 00020029, RB248579). **Minas Gerais**: Araponga, 20°39'S, 42° 26'W, 1200 m alt., 03/VII/2019, lf., fl., *M. Nadruz 3532* (RB789452). Carangola, 17/X/1996, lf., fr., *J.A. Lombardi 1422* (BHCB barcode 041372, ESA101298, UEC barcode 136091). Itabirinha de Mantena, 18°29'35"S, 41°10'47"W, 708 m alt., 03/ VII/2009, fl., *L. Kollmann 11702* (MBML barcode 00020025). Nanuque, 14/VIII/1965, lf., fl., *J.P. Lanna Sobrinho 1123* (R128592). Santa Maria do Salto, 16°15'37"S, 40°02'35"W, 235 m alt., 26/VII/2003, lf., fl., fr., *J.A. Lombardi 5594* (BHCB barcode 041390, HUEFS barcode 000141768, UEC barcode 002275). São João do Manteninha, 18°45'43"S, 41°08'41"W, 350 m alt., 15/ VII/2011, fl., *J.G. Carvalho-Sobrinho 3175* (HUEFS barcode 000141876). Teófilo Otoni, 17°54'45"S, 41°11'30"W, 280 m alt., 30/V/2011, lf., *L.P. Queiroz 15293* (HUEFS barcode 000116070); 28/VIII/1958, fl., fr., *G. Mendes-Magalhães 14160* (R112136). **Rio de Janeiro**: Campos dos Goytacazes, 21°47'40"S, 41°27'14"W, 130 m alt., 16/VI/2021, lf., fl., *D.R. Couto 5430* (HUENF12500). Petrópolis, 900 m alt., 01/VI/1977, fl., *G. Martinelli 2554* (RB197576); 1,600 m, 06/X/1983, lf., fl., fr., *G. Martinelli 9578* (RB216566, K); 22°25'40"S, 43°16'51"W, 1100 m alt., 03/ VIII/2011, fl., *J.G. Carvalho-Sobrinho & A.C. Mota 3193* (HUEFS barcode 000143754). Santa Maria Madalena, 21° 52' 54"S, 41° 56' 37"W, 661 m alt., 09/VIII/2018, fl., *M. Nadruz 3405* (RB barcode 01397200). Varre-Sai, 20°55'10"S, 41°49'24"W, 675 m alt., 14/ V/2011, lf., fr., *J.G. Carvalho-Sobrinho 3078* (HUEFS barcode 000142217).

Taxonomic Notes

Pseudobombax petropolitanum belongs in a clade including two additional Atlantic Forest species: *P. grandiflorum* (Cav.) A.Robyns and *P. majus* (A.Robyns) Carv.-Sobr. (Carvalho-Sobrinho et al., 2016) and can be distinguished from these two species based on morphological and ecological traits. *Pseudobombax petropolitanum* differs from *P. grandiflorum* based on 3–5(6)-foliolate (vs. 5–7) leaves, petiolules (7–)10–33 mm long (vs. to 6 mm long) and oblongoid (vs. obovoid, rarely fusiform or ovoid) capsules that are 5-angulate to 5-costate (vs. strongly 5-costate). Additionally, *P. petropolitanum* flowers from June to September whereas *P. grandiflorum* flowers from September to January. From *Pseudobombax majus*, *P. petropolitanum* can be distinguished by 3–5(6) (vs. 7–11)-foliolate leaves, cymes 1-2-flowered (vs. cymes 3–7-flowered), cupuliform, truncate (vs. urceolate, often lobed) calyces, and shorter calyces (10 –18 vs. 30–40 mm long), staminal tubes (13–15 vs. 43–55 mm long), and fruits (80–150 vs. 220–300 mm long). Moreover, in *P. petropolitanum* the filaments originate from the apex of the staminal tube whereas in *P. majus* the filaments originate below the apex (Carvalho-Sobrinho & Dorr, 2017; Carvalho-Sobrinho & Yoshikawa, 2025).

Geographical Distribution and Ecology

Pseudobombax petropolitanum also differs from the aforementioned species in the rupicolous habit. It is endemic to granitic-gneissic rock outcrops from 100 to 1,600 m elevation from southern Bahia to Rio de Janeiro (Figure 4), a geographic distribution pattern observed in other Atlantic Forest rupicolous species as, for example, *Anemia organensis* Rosenst., which ranges from 150 to about 2,000 m elevation (CRIA, 2025).

Within its range, *Pseudobombax petropolitanum* occurs in lower altitudinal areas at lower latitudes (southern Bahia and northern Espírito Santo) and higher altitude areas at higher latitudes (southern Espírito Santo and Rio de Janeiro). It is allopatric to *P. grandiflorum* and sympatric to *P. majus* in mountain areas in the State of Espírito Santo, differing in its occurrence in pre-coastal plateau over Archean rocks whereas *P. grandiflorum* and *P. majus* are mostly found in the Holocenic formations in sandy soils or riparian forests.

Pseudobombax petropolitanum is one of the few tree species in Atlantic Forest inselbergs and presents a notable ecological importance acting as a facilitator (Figure 2), as observed in Espírito Santo (Couto et al., 2016), to species such as *Pilosocereus brasiliensis subsp. ruschianus* (Buining & Brederoo) Zappi and the threatened orchid *Cattleya grandis* (Lindl.) A.A.Chadwick.

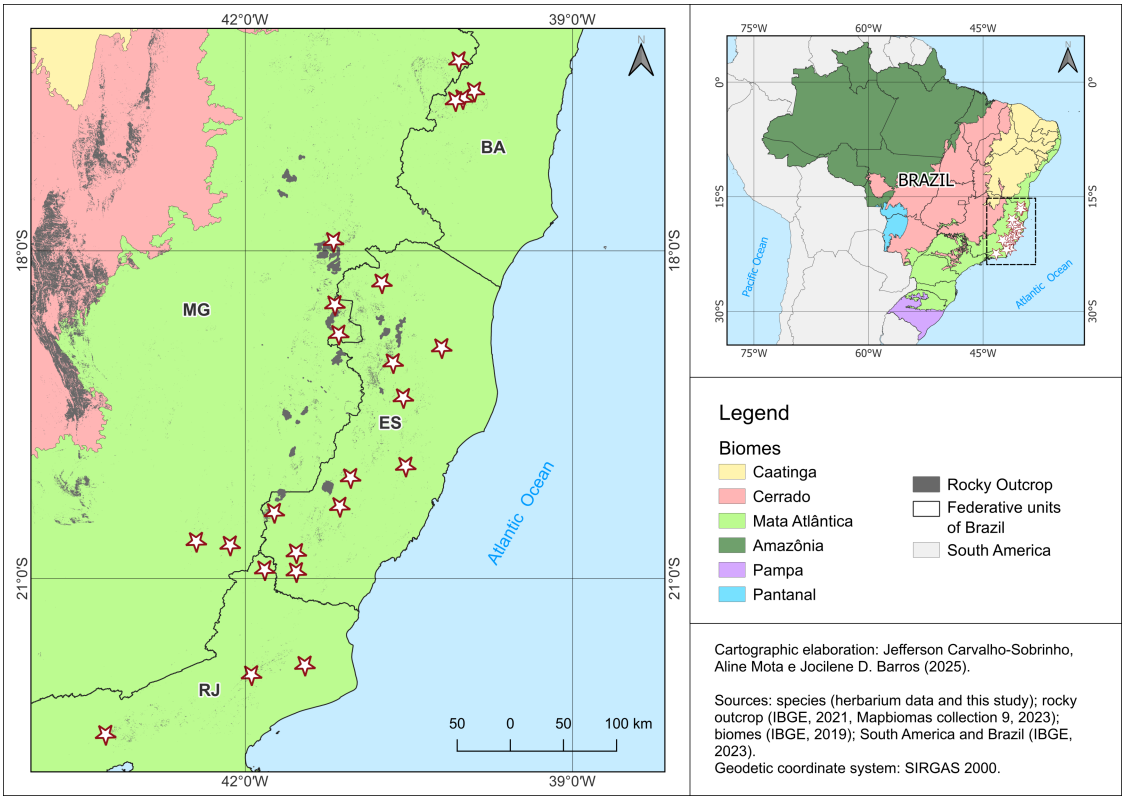
Conservation Notes

The occurrence of *Pseudobombax petropolitanum* in Atlantic Forest inselbergs of southern of Bahia does not alter its Endangered status. Nevertheless, it highlights the importance of conservation of the peculiar flora and vegetation of these singular habitats. While overlooked by review studies of inselbergs in Brazil (Scarano, 2007; Silva, 2016), the presence of inselbergs in Bahia was noted by Porembski et al. (1998), Porembski (2007), and Martinelli (2007) who highlighted the importance of the "inselbergs of Itamaraju" that include the Guaratinga inselbergs. Additional inselbergs areas in Bahia have been indicated by Queiroz et al. (1996), Amorim et al. (2009), Amorim and Matos (2009). Such areas have originated

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Figure 4

Distribution Map of Pseudobombax petropolitanum *A.Robyns (Malvaceae)*



newly described and endemic species, including *Eriotheca paganuccii* Carv.-Sobr., A.C.Mota & Dorr which is endemic to such rock outcrops in the State (Carvalho-Sobrinho et al., 2024). The Atlantic Forest inselbergs in Bahia have received little attention and demand studies, especially on floristics and population genetics, that can subsidize its conservation. The distribution of *Pseudobombax petropolitanum* make it an interesting model to investigate patterns of variability and gene flow that may subsidize conservation strategies. Thus, the achievement of population genetic data for *P. petropolitanum* to compare especially with those available for taxa with similar biological traits (i.e., chiropterophilous pollination and wind seed dispersal), as is the case of Bromeliaceae (Barbará et al., 2007), may represent a promising venue.

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Author Contributions

Conceptualization: JCS. Data curation: JCS, ACM. Formal Analysis: JCS. Funding acquisition: JCS. Investigation: JCS, ACM. Methodology: JCS, ACM. Resources: JCS, ACM. Software: JCS, ACM. Validation: JCS, ACM. Visualization: JCS, ACM. Writing – original draft: JCS. Writing – review & editing: JCS, ACM.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest to report.

Data Availability

We declare that we deposited the manuscript supporting data in the herbarium HUEFS as a public repository.

Ethical Compliance

Not applicable.

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