



## ***Minasia ramosa* (Asteraceae: Vernonieae), a new species from the Serra do Cabral, Minas Gerais, Brazil**

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### **Abstract**

*Minasia ramosa*, a new species from Brazil, is here described and illustrated. The species is endemic to the *campos rupestres* of the Serra do Cabral, a western extension of the Espinhaço Range in Minas Gerais. *Minasia ramosa* is characterized by its narrow ensiform leaves, paniculate inflorescence and totally setuliferous cypselae. The affinities of this species are discussed.

**Key words:** Lychnophorinae, Espinhaço Range, Compositae, campos rupestres

### **Introduction**

*Minasia* Robinson (1992: 648) is a small genus of six species of the subtribe Lychnophorinae (Vernonieae: Asteraceae), endemic to the *campos rupestres* of the Espinhaço range (Minas Gerais State) in southeastern Brazil (Loeuille 2010). *Minasia* species are characteristically perennial rosetiform silvery herbs, with scapose inflorescences and crowded or pedunculate heads (Robinson 2007). The greatest diversity of *Minasia* species is found in the Planalto de Diamantina with five of the six species previously described (Semir & Jesus 2004). With the exception of *M. splettiae* Robinson (1995: 397), all the species have been listed as critically endangered due to their restricted distributions and small population sizes (COPAM 1997, Fundação Biodiversitas 2005, Nakajima *et al.* 2009). Furthermore, Jesus *et al.* (2009) have found that the genetic variation of *Minasia* species is low, and that a substantial portion of genetic diversity could be lost with the extinction of only one population.

Robinson (1996) considered one *Minasia* specimen (*G. Hatschbach et al.* 64718) from the Serra do Cabral different from all of the other specimens ascribed to *Minasia* species seen at that time, including *M. cabralensis* Robinson (1996: 350) that occurred in the same area. The totally setuliferous cypselae and general inflorescence form are similar to *M. pereirae* Robinson (1992: 650) but the specimen (*G. Hatschbach et al.* 64718) does not have the typical oblanceolate leaves of that species. Robinson (1996) considered a more complete representation of *M. pereirae* necessary to identify this specimen.

In the course of their genetic study of *Minasia*, Jesus *et al.* (2009) noticed an interesting allozyme variation for *M. cabralensis*, the only species of *Minasia* known at the time from Serra do Cabral. Of the six populations sampled in the area and ascribed by Jesus *et al.* (2009) to *M. cabralensis*, two populations (*cab-e* and *cab-f*) differed noticeably from the other four populations sampled (*cab-a*, *cab-b*, *cab-c* and *cab-d*), which in terms of genetic distance ended closer to the other *Minasia* species, rather than closer to conspecific