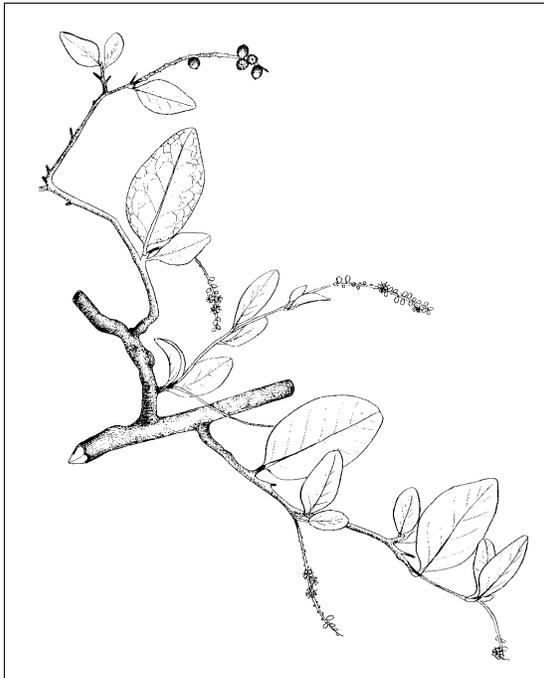


***Coccoloba microstachya* Willd.**
POLYGONACEAE

pockhout

Synonyms: *Coccoloba parvifolia* Poir. in Lam.
Coccoloba klotzschiana Meisn. in DC.
Coccoloba microstachya var. *ovalifolia* Miesn. in DC.
Coccoloba microstachya var. *lanceolata* Meisn. in DC.
Coccoloba microstachya var. *rotundifolia* Urban ex Lindau
Coccoloba microstachya var. *obtusifolia* Lindau



General Description.—Pockhout, a name used in the Virgin Islands, is known as uவில்லு, uverillo, and negra loca in Puerto Rico and Hispaniola. It is an evergreen or semideciduous shrub or small tree usually 2 to 6 m in height and 2 to 7 cm in diameter at breast height. It is limby and twiggy with a contorted form and often develops multiple stems from suckers on the lower stem. The wood is light brown and hard. The plants are supported by a weak taproot and many, extensive, reddish-brown, tough and flexible lateral roots. The fine roots have clearly visible mycorrhizal sheaths. The stem bark is gray, smooth, becoming deeply furrowed into plates in old individuals. The twigs are brown to gray, smooth with lenticels. The light-green, alternate leaves have short petioles, 3 to 6 mm long, have broadly elliptic to ovate-lanceolate blades 3.5 to 7 cm long, entire edges and generally rounded at both ends. Inflorescences

are terminal spikes. Male and female flowers are borne on different shrubs (dioecious). The flowers are greenish white and tiny. The egg-shaped fruits are sessile, 6 mm long, nearly black or dark brown when ripe, and contain one blackish seed (Liogier 1985, Little and others 1974).

Range.—Pockhout is native to Hispaniola, Puerto Rico and its offshore islands, and the Virgin Islands (Liogier 1985). Little and others (1974) also list Anguilla as having a population. The species is not known to have been planted or naturalized elsewhere.

Ecology.—Pockhout grows on a wide variety of well- to excessively-drained soils over sedimentary (especially limestone), igneous, and metamorphic (especially ultramafic) rocks. The sites are usually hill tops, ridges, or upper slopes with shallow and rocky soils. In Puerto Rico, this habitat varies from 750 to about 1700 mm of mean annual precipitation at elevations from near sea level to 760 m. The species is normally dispersed throughout the secondary forest and does not form pure thickets (Weaver and others 1999). Pockhout is moderately intolerant of shade. It grows in intermediate and codominant positions in open, low forests as well as dominating in more difficult sites.

Reproduction.—Pockhout flowers during the summer and fruits during the winter (Little and others 1974). Fruit and seed production can be relatively heavy in open-grown trees. Fresh fruits collected in Puerto Rico averaged 0.0517 ± 0.0075 g/fruit. Air-dried seeds separated from them averaged 70,400 seeds/kg. Sown without pretreatment on moist filter paper, 98 percent germinated beginning 16 days after sowing (Francis and Rodríguez 1993). Seedlings are uncommon.

Growth and Management.—Pockhout is slow growing and long lived. No published planting or management experience is known to the author.

Benefits.—Pockhout contributes to the biodiversity of secondary and remnant forests, helps protect the soil, and furnishes food and cover for wildlife. The wood is good for fuel.

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