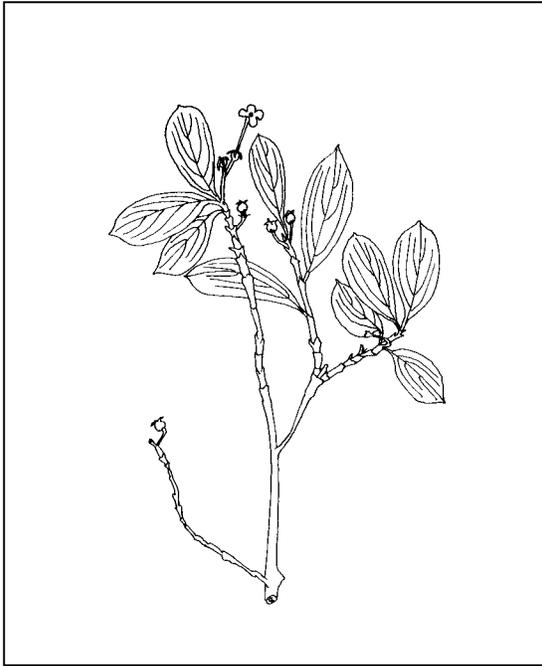


***Rondeletia pilosa* Sw.**
RUBIACEAE

cordobancillo peludo

Synonyms: *Rondeletia triflora* Vahl
Oldenlandia longiflora Lam.
Hedyotis longiflora (Lam.) Spreng.



General Description.—Cordobancillo peludo, also known as cachimbo peludo and lechecillo, is an evergreen shrub or small tree commonly 1.5 to 2 m in height and 2 cm in basal diameter but sometimes reaching 5 m in height. It may have several stems from the base. The form is usually upright but occasionally vine-like. Stem bark is gray and smooth. The plants examined by the author had a tan colored, robust, shallow lateral root system with sparse secondary and tertiary roots. The twigs are long, slender, forking, and ringed at the nodes. Soft hairs cover the twigs and lower surfaces of the leaves. The leaves are opposite, with entire, elliptic blades 4 to 10 cm long and 2 to 3.5 cm broad, and pointed at both ends, and have a petiole 3 to 6 mm long. Inflorescences are axillary and usually have three flowers with peduncles up to 7 cm long. The flowers have four-lobbed hairy calyxes and corollas. The corollas are white with red-tipped lobes. The two-celled capsules are rounded, 3 mm in diameter, with calyx lobes persistent. The capsules produce many minute brown seeds (Liogier 1997, Little and others 1974).

Range.—Cordobancillo peludo is native to Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Monsarrat (Liogier 1997). It is not known to have been planted or naturalized elsewhere.

Ecology.—Cordobancillo peludo occurs in areas that receive from about 750 to about 1000 mm of mean annual precipitation from near sea level to about 450 m in elevation. Soil texture does not appear to be a limiting factor. All are well- to excessively-well drained. Soil pH's range from about 5.5 to 8.0. Parent materials may be sedimentary (including limestone), igneous, and metamorphic (including ultramaphic) rocks. It is moderately intolerant and grows in open areas as well as under low basal-area low forest. Because the species is not highly competitive, cordobancillo peludo is more likely to survive where growth otherwise is limited—such as very rocky terrain. It is scattered to rare in coastal thickets, and remnant and middle to late secondary forests in upland areas.

Reproduction.—Cordobancillo peludo appears to flower and fruit throughout the year. In terms of numbers, production of seeds is huge. The seeds are dispersed by the wind. However, seedlings are uncommon. The seeds number a few million/kg. Of a group of seeds sown on moist filter paper, 69 percent germinated between 15 and 70 days after sowing. Germination is epigeal.

Growth and Management.—Growth of cordobancillo peludo is slow. Basal sprouts in one stand grew about 30 cm/year. One plant with a 2.5-cm basal diameter had 10 growth rings. Individual stems probably last 10 to 20 years, and plants can prolong their lives by coppicing. No planting or management experience is known to the author. Probably the best management strategy is to protect remnant stands and late-secondary forests containing the species.

Benefits.—Cordobancillo peludo contributes to the aesthetics of the forest, it helps protect the soil, and furnishes cover for wildlife. The wood is

useful for small-diameter fuel.

References

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