

NOTA BOTÁNICA

ECHINODORUS BERTEROI (SPRENGEL) FASSET (ALISMATACEAE) FROM
WESTERN PARAGUAY

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Description: Annual aquatic plants, leaves as rosette, emersed, floating or submersed. Submersed leaves linear, with short petioles. Floating and emersed leaves with long petioles, blades elliptic to cordate, with long pellucid lines. Inflorescence erect, racemose or paniculate, up to 50 cm tall, with several whorls, without vegetative proliferations. The whorls are with 2-7 flowers, pedicels are 1-3 cm long. Flowers white, about 1cm wide, with about 15 stamens and numerous carpels. Fruits ribbed, glands 0-2, the beak long, about one third of the whole length of the fruit (Fig. 1).

Common name: In Paraguay: chapel.

Ecology: Annual aquatics growing in marshes and temporary pools.

Use: The species is used as ornamental in aquaria, however, not as often as many other species of the genus (RATAJ, 2004).

Distribution: From northern United States to Central America and Caribbean Islands (FASSET 1955), according to HAYNES & HOLM-NIELSEN (1994) also from Guyana, Ecuador and Peru. Collected also from Patagonia, but these plants are often treated as separate species (SPEGAZZINI, 1902), variations (RATAJ, 1975) or subspecies (RATAJ, 2004). Now, also recorded from the Chaco of Paraguay.

Material examined: Boquerón, Tinfunké, Mereles, F. 708 (FCQ); Tinfunké, cercanías del río Pilcomayo, Mereles, F. 707 (CTES, FCQ).

Discussion: The distribution of *Echinodorus berteroi* is interesting. The main distribution area covers United States and Mexico, but the species has been collected several times also from South America, mainly close to the Andes. Whether these collections represents only short living populations distributed by migrating birds, or constant presence of *Echinodorus berteroi* in South America is not clear. However, since specimens collected from Paraguay are very typical examples of the species, there seem to be no reason for separating different subspecies, as made by RATAJ (1975 & 2004).

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Fig. 1. Hábito de *Echinodorus berteroi* (Sprengel) Fasset