

## Threatened plants of western Cameroon

# *Ancistrocladus grandiflorus* Cheek\* (*Ancistrocladaceae*)

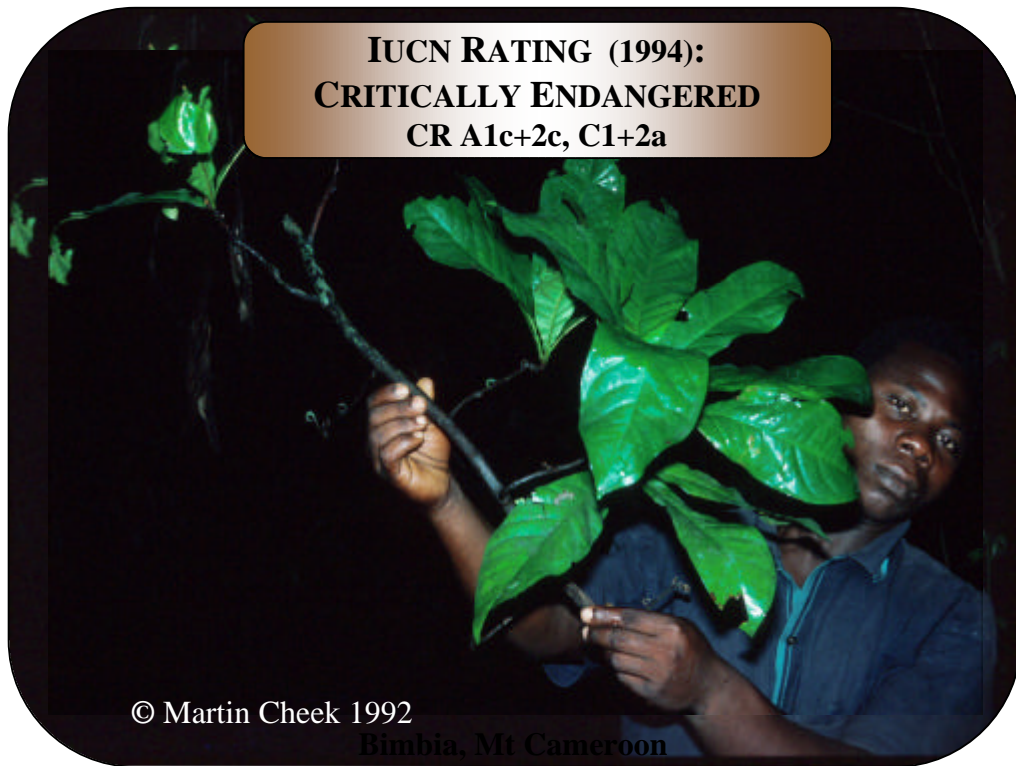
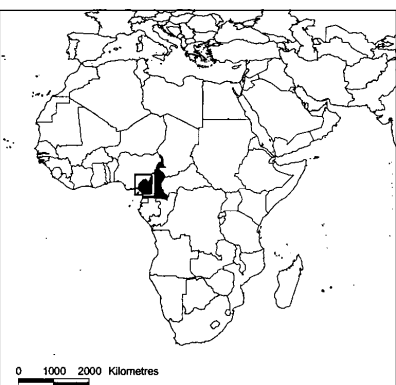
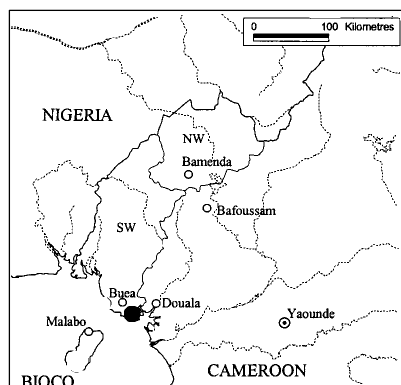


FIG. 1. *Ancistrocladus grandiflorus*. A habit, flowering spur shoot; B leaf from main stem; C leaf bases showing pulvini (main stem), abaxial (left) & adaxial (right); D flower in bud, showing contorted petals (sepals removed); E flower in bud, showing glandular sepals; F flower, proximal perianth and stamens removed; G petal, inner surface with adnate stamens; H old infructescence, showing branching & bracts. Scale bars = 1 cm. All from Cheek & Ndumbe 3915. Drawn by Susanna Stuart-Smith.



Africa and western Cameroon



Distribution map of  
*Ancistrocladus grandiflorus*

*Ancistrocladus* is a genus of lianas restricted to Africa (13 species) and SE Asia (c. 7 spp.). In Africa the centre of diversity is in the Gulf of Guinea with 6 species between the Cross and Sanaga rivers, including this recently described species: *A. grandiflorus*. Recent interest in the genus was fuelled by discovery, in *A. korupensis*, of the presence of michellamine B, an alkaloid that has shown high levels of activity against HIV. It is, however, toxic to humans.

*A. grandiflorus* is so named for its flowers, which are the largest known in the genus. It is a woody climber to at least 7m high, the flowering spur stems with 1 – 3 woody recurved hooks, and a rosette of 8 – 10 leaves. It is currently only known from 6 plants located between sea-level and 50m altitude, in 36 km<sup>2</sup> of evergreen lowland forest at Bonadikombe - Bimbia (formerly Mabetamoliwe). Two collections from the Rumpi Hills and the Douala-Edea road may be this species but flowering material is needed.

Almost all of the Bonadikombe forest stands on land reserved for plantation expansion, although a more immediate threat is forest clearance by small-holder agriculturists from the nearby town of Limbe. This species is regarded as being Critically Endangered globally.

\* Cheek, M. (2001) A synoptic revision of *Ancistrocladus* (*Ancistrocladaceae*) in Africa, with a new species from Western Cameroon. Kew Bull. 55: 871 – 882.