

Threatened plants of western Cameroon

Cola suboppositifolia Cheek (*Sterculiaceae*)

The 'Opposite-leaved Monkey Cola'

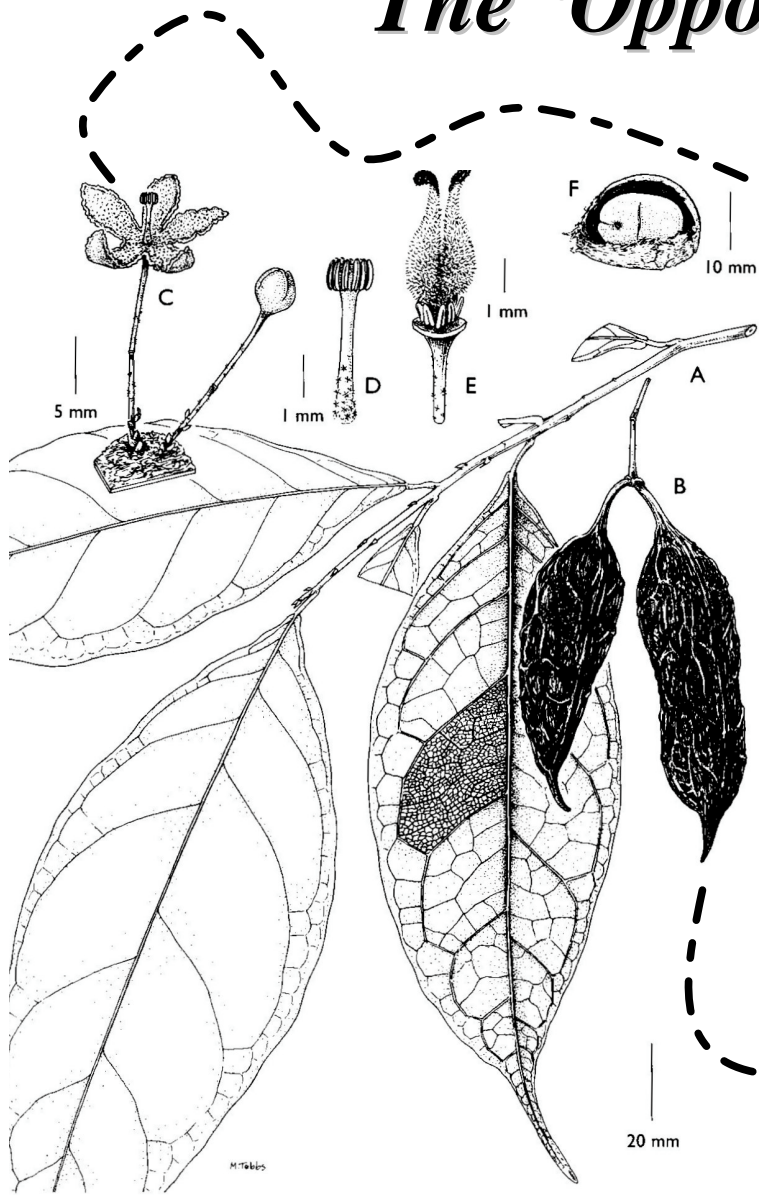
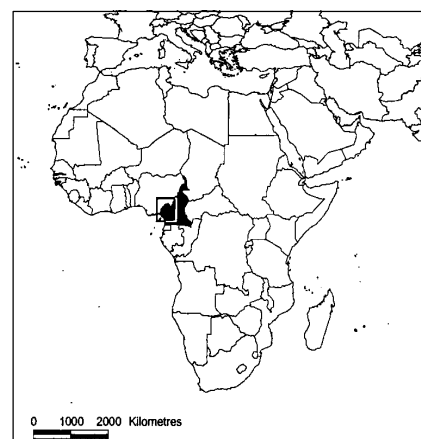


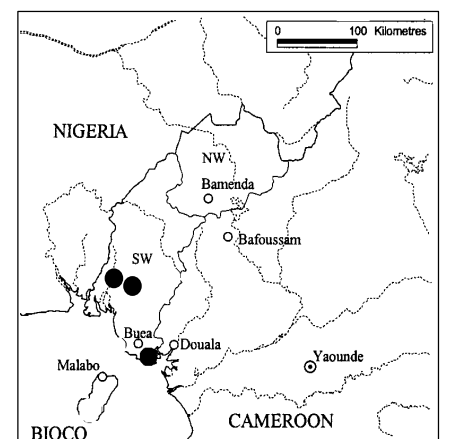
FIG. 3. *Cola suboppositifolia*. A habit; B fruit; C inflorescence, showing male flower; D androphore with stamens (male flower); E female flower, perianth removed; F seed, testa partly removed, showing cotyledon. A, C & D Wheatley 792; B & F Tchouto 658; E Nilam 1240. Drawn by Margaret Tebbs.

This species of 'Monkey Cola' is only known from three sites in S.W. Province, Cameroon and nowhere else in the world:

- 1) Banyang Mbo Wildlife Sanctuary
- 2) Korup National Park
- 3) Mt Cameroon (Onge & Mokoko)



Africa and western Cameroon



Distribution map of *Cola suboppositifolia*

Cola suboppositifolia is unique among Africa's 100+ wild species of *Cola* in having more or less opposite and not alternate leaves, and just two carpels. Cameroon, in particular western Cameroon has the world's greatest diversity of *Cola* species. They are usually found only in 'Black Bush' and are threatened by clearance for agriculture. The 'opposite-leaved *Cola*' has been assessed as Vulnerable (VU A1c + 2c) using the criteria of the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature).

Teams of botanists from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in London, England and staff of the National Herbarium of Cameroon have been working together to discover and protect threatened plant species since 1996.

Cheek, Martin (2002). Three new species of *Cola* (*Sterculiaceae*) from western Cameroon. *Kew Bull.* 57: 403 – 415.