

The New Records for the Flora of the United Arab Emirates

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Introduction

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is situated in the south-east of the Arabian Peninsula with an area of 83,600 square km. The country is mostly desert with massive sand dunes and scattered oases, while the Hajar Mountain range is found in the north-east. Soils are generally poor in nutrients and are found in four main landforms: sand, salt flat, gravel and mountains. Keeping in view the size and nature of its habitats, the UAE has a wide diversity in its flora, which has evolved to survive in the existing harsh environment.

Three books on the UAE flora have been written, which describe around 737 plant species found here. Later different botanical explorations carried out by various researchers revealed that there are many other plant species in the country, which have not been reported in the UAE flora books. If these additional species are added to those recorded as described above, then the UAE total would cross 780.

To find more undocumented wild plant species, International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) started a program to explore different regions of the country.

Material and methods

Botanical expeditions to different parts of the UAE were carried out during 2012 and 2015. Apart from collecting specimens of plant species, data on their population and habitats were also recorded, while a Garmin GPS 72H was used to record geographical coordinates.

Results and discussion

During various floral explorations conducted by ICBA, 18 wild plant species were found in different regions of the country that were not documented earlier (Shahid, 2014; Shahid & Rao 2014a; Shahid & Rao, 2014b; Shahid & Rao, 2015a; Shahid & Rao, 2015b; Shahid & Rao, 2015c).

Species	Family	Emirate
<i>Alternanthera sessilis</i>	Amaranthaceae	Dubai
<i>Amaranthus lividus</i>	Amaranthaceae	Dubai
<i>Verbesina encelioides</i>	Asteraceae	Ras al Khaimah
<i>Gamochaeta pensylvanica</i>	Asteraceae	Dubai
<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	Asteraceae	Abu Dhabi
<i>Launea intybacea</i>	Asteraceae	Fujairah
<i>Vaccaria hispanica</i>	Caryophyllaceae	Abu Dhabi
<i>Silene arabica</i>	Caryophyllaceae	Dubai
<i>Commelina forskalii</i>	Commelinaceae	Dubai
<i>Diploaxis eruroides</i>	Cruciferae	Abu Dhabi
<i>Cyperus eremicus</i>	Cyperaceae	Ras al Khaimah
<i>Bromus diandrus</i>	Graminae	Abu Dhabi
<i>Lolium multiflorum</i>	Graminae	Abu Dhabi
<i>Medicago monantha</i>	Leguminosae	Dubai
<i>Astragalus epiglottis</i>	Leguminosae	Fujairah
<i>Oldenlandia corymbosa</i>	Rubiaceae	Dubai
<i>Kickxia elatine</i>	Scrophulariaceae	Fujairah
<i>Datura ferox</i>	Solanaceae	Ras al Khaimah



Key references

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