

„Taxonomic revision and geographical distribution of the representatives of the subtribe Maxillariinae (Orchidaceae) in the Guiana Shield”
mgr Monika Lipińska

Described in 1881 subtribe Maxillariinae Benth. is one of the largest among the orchid family. Its representatives are distributed from South Florida through Central America and the Caribbean Islands to South America, south to northern Argentina (Schuiteman & Chase 2015). Generic classification of the subtribe Maxillariinae has been a challenge for taxonomists since its formal description (cf. Blanco et al. 2007). For many years it has been suspected that it is an assemblage of taxa, consisting of morphologically disparate groups of species (Whitten et al. 2007). Establishing the exact number of species belonging to the various genera or even the subtribe itself is extremely difficult since it depends mainly on the adopted classification system and the concept of a genus. It is said that *Maxillaria* Ruiz & Pav., the core genus in the subtribe, covers about 4/5 of species belonging to Maxillariinae (Senghas 2002). According to various researchers, depending on their classification, *Maxillaria* – the largest genus of the subtribe counts from 420 (Dressler, 1993) through 634 (Schuiteman & Chase 2015) to 750 species (Senghas 2002). Lack of clearly defined boundaries of *Maxillaria* resulted in proposing several taxonomic approaches of the subtribe Maxillariinae over the past 150 years.

The main aim of this research was to prepare a complete flora of Maxillariinae in the Guyana Shield, accompanied by keys for their identification and detailed morphological descriptions of every species. Moreover, comprehensive information about taxonomy, ecology, and biogeography was provided, covering such areas as geographical distribution, level of endemism, and phenology of the species found in the study area. Conducted investigation resulted in reporting of 83 species (12,3% of the total number of species classified within Maxillariinae), proposition of 2 new combinations, and type designation for 25 taxa. As much as 22,89% of the species are endemic to the Guiana Shield, reaching the highest number in Guyana and the lowest in Suriname. The presented dissertation is the first comprehensive study of the taxonomical diversity of Maxillariinae in the Guyana Shield.