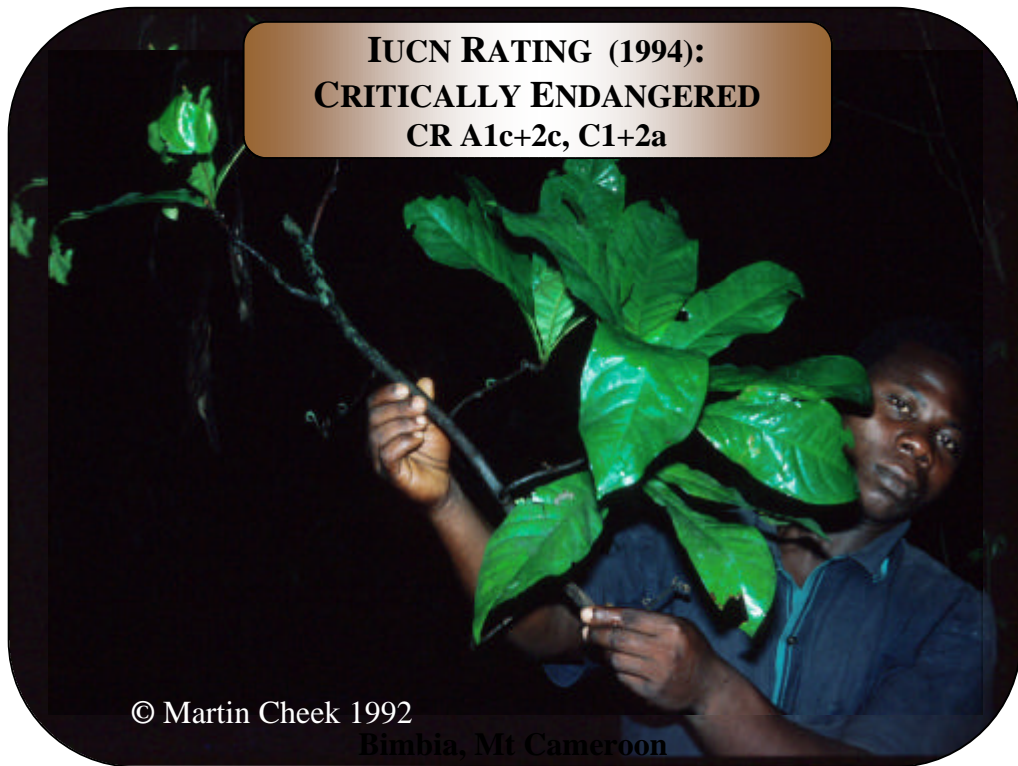


Threatened plants of western Cameroon

Ancistrocladus grandiflorus Cheek* (*Ancistrocladaceae*)

**IUCN RATING (1994):
CRITICALLY ENDANGERED
CR A1c+2c, C1+2a**

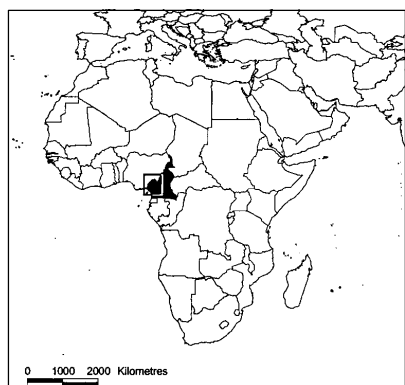


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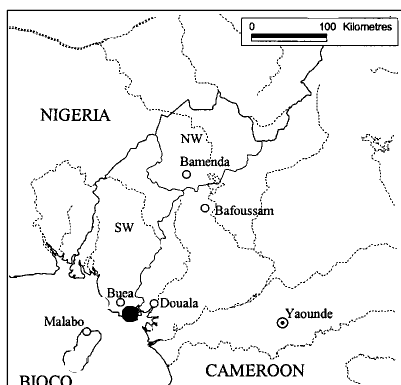
Bimbia, Mt Cameroon



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.



Africa and western Cameroon



Distribution map of
Ancistrocladus grandiflorus

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.

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 km² 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.