

Three New Species of *Begonia* Endemic to the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park, Palawan

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ABSTRACT

Begonia is a mega-diverse genus of flowering plants prone to generating micro-endemic species, especially on limestone habitats. During fieldwork in the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park, Palawan (Philippines), three species were encountered which did not match any previously described from the region. Following morphological, molecular phylogenetic and cytological investigation a hypothesis of three new species is supported. The three new species belong to a clade endemic to Palawan and Borneo. The limestone habitats in the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park environs support a unique flora. The description of three new species from a small area within the park demonstrates how much remains to be discovered there, and the importance of its continued protection.

Keywords: Limestone; endemic; new species; *Begonia*; conservation