

EHRETIACEAE

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A tropical family with seven genera and ~150 species of trees, shrubs, herbs or less often twining or scrambling climbers. In the Neotropics, the Ehretiaceae is represented by ~69 species in eight genera, but only the genus *Keraunea* is confirmed as a climber. *Keraunea* is found in the lowlands in seasonal to dry forests, woodlands and savanna-like formations.

Diagnostics: See description of *Keraunea* below.

General Characters

1. STEMS. Slender, cylindrical, smooth, 3–9 mm in diam. and 2–7 m in length; cross section fistulose, otherwise it's macroanatomy not described.
2. EXUDATES. Apparently inconspicuous as no exudate is reported on any of the known collections.
3. CLIMBING MECHANISMS. Scramblers and weakly twiners.
4. LEAVES. Alternate, simple, chartaceous with entire margins, commonly congested at the end of short axillary shoots; veins pinnate; petioles short, glandless; stipules absent.
5. INFLORESCENCE. Corymbose cymes, terminal on short lateral branches; flowers 3–6, each one with a connate, foliaceous, green bracteole.
6. PEDICELS. Elongated, the distal ½ totally connate to a foliaceous bracteole that is as long as or longer than the flower.
7. FLOWERS. Bisexual, actinomorphic, 5-merous; calyx campanulate, sepals connate on lower ⅓, the lobes lanceolate, long acuminate, of equal length; corolla white, gamopetalous, campanulate, the lobes oblong, 2 or 3 times as long as the tube; stamens 5, equal, the filaments very short, inserted on the corolla tube, the anthers ~9 mm long,

white, opening along longitudinal slits, with an apical connective; disc annular, at the base of the ovary; ovary superior, of 2 connate carpels, bilocular; ovules 2 per locule, axile, the style 1, terminal, with 2 apical stigmata.

KERAUNEA Cheek & Simão-Bianchini, *Nordic J. Bot.* 31: 454. 2013.

Scrambling or twining subwoody vines; stems terete, fistulose, 4–5 mm in diam.,



Keraunea capixaba, photo by G.S. Siqueira.

presenting short (2.5–4.0 cm) axillary shoots with congested leaves; pubescence of erect, translucent, simple hairs; mature stems terete; bark brownish white, irregularly longitudinally ridged, flaking. Leaves simple, ovate or elliptic, obtuse at the apex, with entire margins; short petioled.

Inflorescence terminal on short axillary shoots, corymbose, of 3–6 congested flowers; bracteole foliaceous, green, one per flower or rarely lacking, inserted about the middle of the pedicel, and connate to the distal ½ of pedicel (resembling a flower that is born at the middle of leaf-like bracteole). Calyx campanulate, green, forming a short tube at base, sepals 5, nearly equal, lanceolate, acuminate, petals 3.5–4 mm long, oblong-elliptic, connate into a very short tube at the base, midpetaline weakly developed; stamens 5, inserted at base of corolla tube, glabrous, anthers elongated, large, nearly sessile, basifixed, with an apical connective; disc annular; ovary subglobose, glabrous, 2-locular, with 2 ovules per locule, style conduplicate, stigmas two,

sessile, truncate. Fruit inserted on the middle (pedicel connate to lower ½) of a large, accrescent, foliaceous bract; fruit wide-ellipsoid, indehiscent, crustaceous with persistent calyx at base, fruit and bract wind dispersed as a unit.

Distinctive features: Scrambling or twining subwoody vines, with short lateral shots; fruits small, indehiscent, with a large foliaceous bract adnate to the peduncle and wind dispersed as a unit.

Distribution: A Brazilian endemic genus of five species distributed in NE and SE Brazil, in deciduous forest on limestone substrate or in lowland, dense forests; 9–600 m.