

ROSACEAE

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Primarily a family of subtemperate or subtropical regions of the Northern Hemisphere, with ~100 genera and 3,000 species of herbs, trees, shrubs, and seldom scrambling vines or lianas. The family is represented in the Neotropics by ~30 genera and 800 species, of which only 55 are reported as climbers, all belonging to the genus *Rubus*. The genus is most diverse in humid forests at elevations between 1,500 and 3,000 m elevation.

Diagnostics: Scrambling vines or lianas, stems, leaves and inflorescences armed with recurved prickles; flowers commonly with white corollas and numerous stamens; fruits a syncarp of numerous coherent, fleshy drupes.

General Characters

1. **STEMS.** Stems slender (< 1 cm in diam.), cylindrical or angled, armed with numerous recurved prickles; cross section with regular anatomy.
2. **EXUDATES.** Scanty, watery, inconspicuous.
3. **CLIMBING MECHANISM.** All climbing species of *Rubus* are scramblers aided by recurved prickles (Figure 216A).
4. **LEAVES.** Leaves are compound (impari-pinnate, palmate, trifoliolate), alternate; leaflets with serrate, serrulate, dentate or lobed margins, and pinnate venation; rachis and blades commonly armed with prickles; petioles short to long, glandless; stipules often large, persistent or caducous.
5. **INFLORESCENCES.** Terminal or axillary racemes, corymbs or panicles, or flowers solitary, the axes commonly armed with prickles.

6. FLOWERS. Actinomorphic, bisexual; long-pedicelled. Sepals 5, free, green; petals 5, free, often white, unguiculate; stamens numerous, the filaments equal or unequal; gynoecium superior, of numerous, coherent, uniovulate carpels.
7. FRUITS. A syncarp of numerous, minute, coherent fleshy drupes, commonly red or purple.

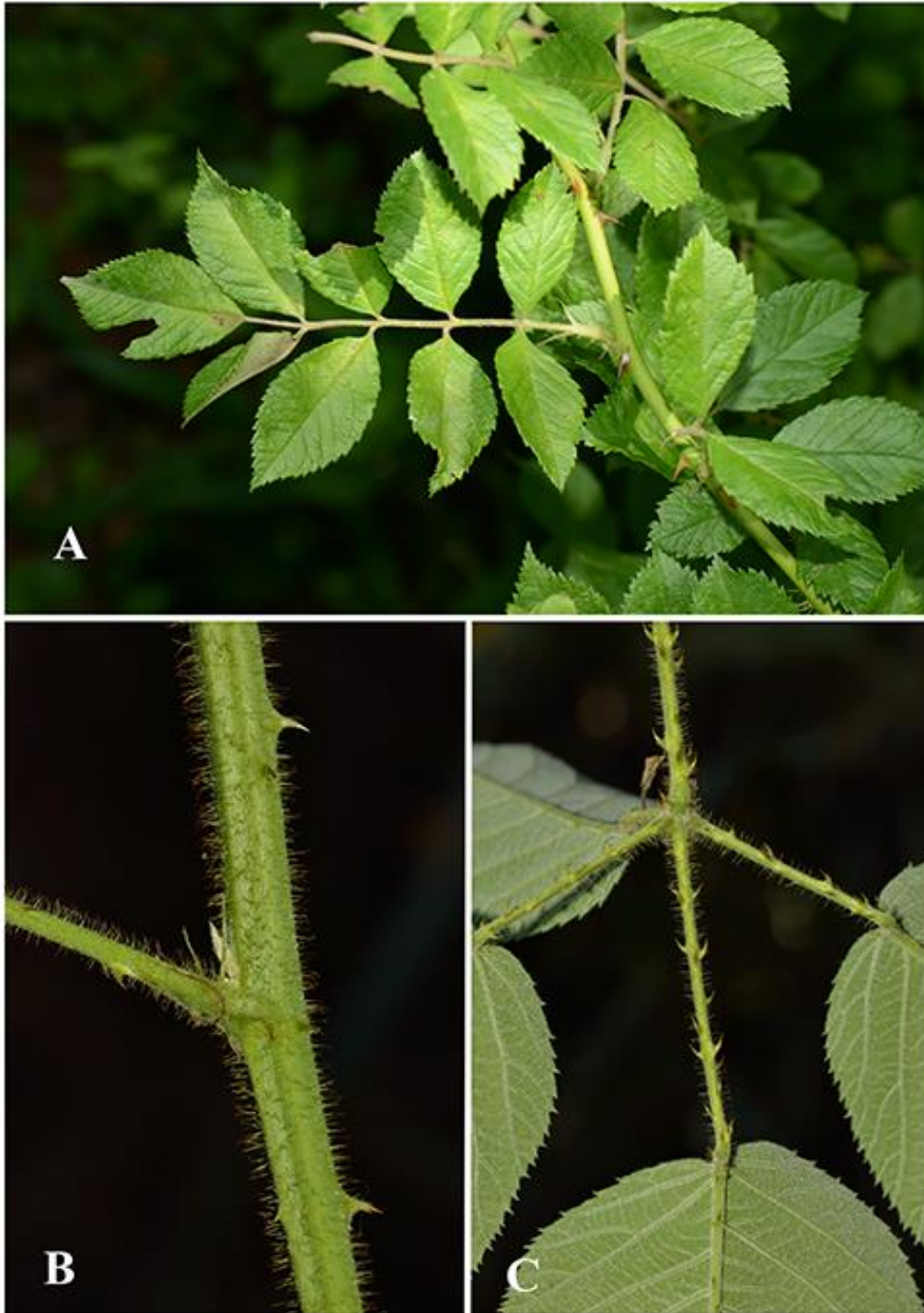


Figure 216. *Rubus*. **A.** Branch with imparipinnate leaves. **B.** Stems showing prickles and stipules. **C.** Palmately compound leaf. Photos by P. Acevedo.

RUBUS Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 492. 1753.

Erect, scrambling, or decumbent shrubs, with numerous recurved prickles and numerous lateral branches, reaching 3–10 m in length. Leaves alternate, compound, trifoliolate, 5–9-pinnate, or quinate; stipules small to large, conspicuous, usually adnate to the petiole, persistent. Inflorescences of axillary or terminal racemes, corymbs or panicles, or less often solitary. Flowers pedicellate, bisexual, actinomorphic; sepals 5, free or connate at base; petals 5, free, white, commonly unguiculate at base; stamens numerous, the filaments free; gynoecium of numerous, coherent, superior, uniovulate carpels. Fruit a syncarp of numerous, minute, coherent drupes, commonly red or purple.

Distinctive features: Scrambling vines or lianas 3–10 m long, often in forest understory, plant armed with recurved prickles; flowers commonly with white corollas and numerous stamens; fruit a syncarp of numerous coherent, fleshy drupes.

Distribution: A genus of ~1,500 species, with cosmopolitan distribution, with most species in the temperate zone or in the mountains (above 1,500 m elevation) of the tropics, absent from the humid, lowland equatorial forests. About 110 species in the Neotropics, 55 of which are known to be climbers; distributed from Mexico to southern Brazil and Bolivia.