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Big Trefoil naturalized in Southwest Argentina

In Lotus Newsletter 11 we reported Lotus tenuis Waldst. as a naturalized species in Argentina. Now we want to show the approximate distribution of Lotus pedunculatus Cav.

The latter grows on wet meadows on the slopes of hills along the Cordillera de los Andes through west Neuquén, Río Negro and Chubut provinces, (Fig. 1), although it is more abundant on the Chilean side of the mountain range.

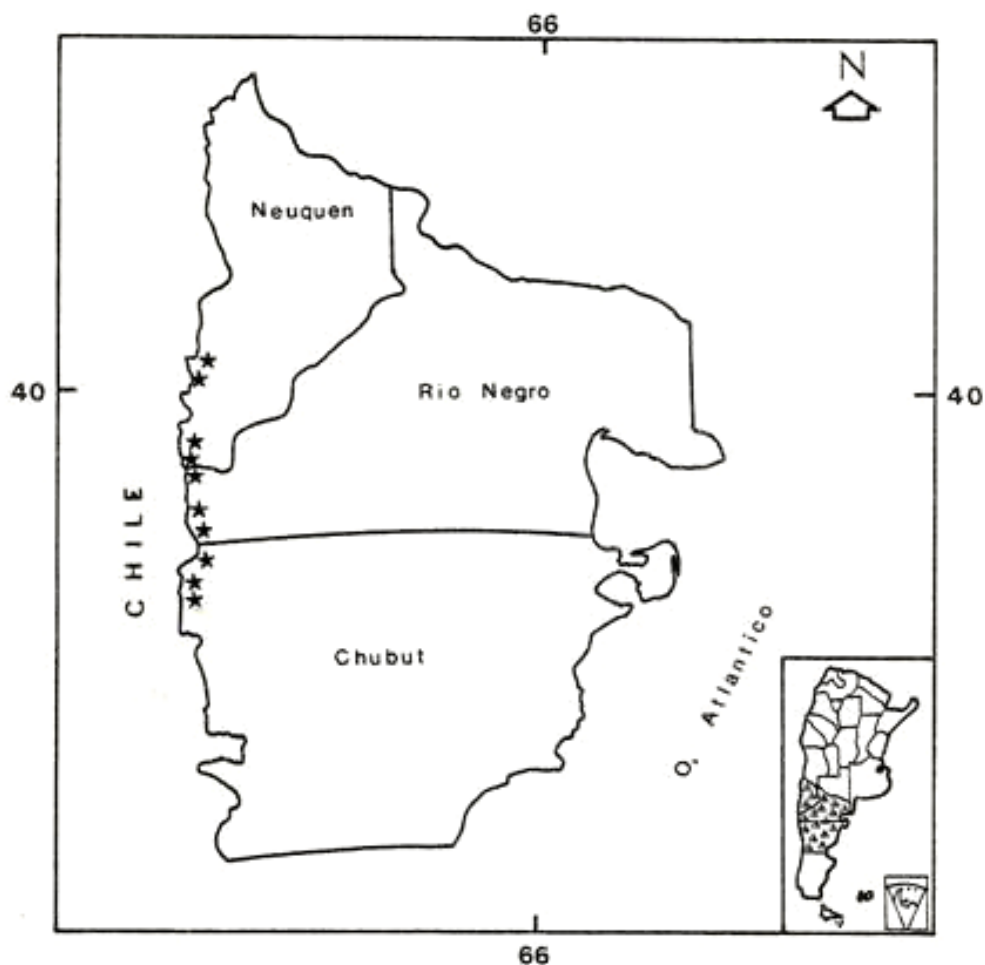


Fig. 1. Approximate distribution of L. pedunculatus in Argentina.

Apparently it spreads better on acid soils and under conditions of high humidity. These conditions could be found in the heavy forest of the region, where 3.000 - 4.000 mm of annual rainfall could be registered (at Puerto Blest, for example).

The populations studied have a somatic chromosome number of 12, with a central index leaflet ranging between 1.4 and 3.0. As it is well known, big trefoil is acyanogenic, and furthermore, it is a low bloating legume.

We found vigorous stands growing in Neuquén (Río Ocon, Lago Epulafquen, Lago Espejo, etc.), in Río Negro (Puerto Blest, slope of Cerro Tronador, Río Foyel, etc.) and in Chubut (Lago Puelo, Lago Rivadavia, Lago Futalaufquen, etc.).

Both big trefoil and narrowleaf trefoil are potentially valuable legumes for the improvement of pastures in Argentina.

Small quantities of seeds are available on request.
