

Current status and uses of the endemic *Lotus* to the Canary Islands.

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The genus *Lotus* in the Canary Islands is represented by 24 species, being seventeen of them endemic (Acebes *et al.*, 2004). According to other authors (Sandral *et al.*, 2006) the number is lesser (14 species and some infraspecific taxa). They are included in several sections or subgenera depending on the taxonomic view of diverse authors. The Canary endemic *Lotus*, including *L. glaucus* and *L. lancerottensis* which are also present in Madeira, are included in two taxa: Sect. *Pedrosia* (Lowe) Christ or subgen. *Pedrosia* (Lowe) Brand and subgen. *Rhyncholotus* Monod or sect. *Rhyncholotus* (Monod) Sokoloff. The non endemic species are included in some infrageneric taxa. Regarding to the taxonomic treatment of sect. *Pedrosia* the publication of Sandral *et al.* (2006) has produced several taxonomical changes. The main changes are: *L. glaucus* is considered endemic to Madeira and Salvagen Islands, and consequently not represented in Canary Islands (although they mention a record for *L. glaucus* s.l. to Fuerteventura, as a possible synonym of *L. erythrorhizus* Bolle). The records of *L. glaucus* mentioned for Canaries are now considered to belong to *L. tenellus* (Lowe) Sandral, Santos & Sokoloff. Major changes are made in the group of the typical *Lotus* of the Canary pine woodland: *L. holosericeus* Webb & Berthel. is included as synonym of *L. spartioides* Webb & Berthel, an endemic taxon of the Gran Canaria pine woodland. *L. hillebrandii* Christ, endemic of La Palma, is included as a subspecies of *L. campylocladus* Webb & Berthel., and the type subspecies remain as endemic of Tenerife. Currently Felicia Oliva Tejera is carrying out the studies of her PhD in our Department at the University of La Laguna in collaboration with the Botanical Garden “Viera y Clavijo” of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria which is entitled “Morphological and molecular studies of the endemic Canary *Lotus* (Fabaceae: Loteae) of the pine woodland”. The first results of the molecular (isoenzymes) and morphological studies (Oliva Tejera, 2006) indicate that *L. holosericeus*, an endemic of the south pine woodland of Gran Canaria, is different to *L. spartioides*, an endemic of the north and northwest pine woodland of that island. The infraspecific status of *L. hillebrandii* is also considered. We do not know other different use that ornamental for the Canary *Lotus* although could be used as a fodder. Mainly *Lotus* section *Rhyncholotus*, commonly called “picos de paloma” are used for such purpose. We think they could play a role in the soil conservation in arid, semiarid and dry areas, ranging from pine woodland to the coast in the Canary Islands.

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