

NOTES AND NEWS

EUPHORBIA ANTISYPHILITICA DISCOVERED IN SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO. A very unusual species, *Euphorbia antisiphilitica* Zucc., has been found in southern New Mexico. Candelilla, as it is commonly called, had only been reported in the United States from the Big Bend area of Brewster County, Texas, and 5 states in Mexico: Zacatecas, San Luis Potosí, Coahuila, Durango, and Nuevo Leon. The discovery of the species in New Mexico extends its known range some 350 miles north of the Texas locality.



FIG. 1. Large clump of *Euphorbia antisiphilitica* on the east slope of the San Andres Mountains showing the vigorous and closely spaced branches characteristic of the species.

This large clump of *E. antisiphilitica*, which is 30 feet across (fig. 1), was discovered by Mr. Cecil Kennedy of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It is located on Bennett Mountain on the eastern slope of the San Andres Mountains, Dona Ana County, at an altitude of 4,200 feet where it grows on a gravelly ridge and appears to be thriving as the stems are about 30 inches high. The rainfall here is limited, averaging 10 to 12 inches a year. A very thorough search of the San Andres Mountains and vicinity by Mr. Kennedy, who has worked in the area for over 13 years, has not revealed the presence of additional plants of *E. antisiphilitica*. This newly discovered locality is possibly relictual from a more continuous and extensive range of the species which existed many years ago.

Other desert plants associated with it are *Tridens pulchellus*, *Enneapogon desvauxii*, *Setaria macrostachya*, *Ephedra trifurca*, *Fouquieria splendens*, *Dasyllirion wheeleri*, *Opuntia macrocentra*, *Dalea formosa*, *Larrea divaricata*, and *Parthenium incanum*. Of interest is that, in Mexico, candelilla usually grows in association with another species of *Parthenium* known as *P. argentatum* or guayule.

Candelilla, a Mexican name for the plant, refers to its very characteristic small reed-like leafless stems. The stems or branches, which are extremely numerous, are covered with a kind of wax which is extracted for commerce. To obtain the wax, the stems are boiled in water whereupon the grayish crude wax rises and is skimmed off. It is primarily used to make candles which burn with a bright light and an agreeable odor. The wax has also been used for phonograph records, shoe polish, floor and furniture polish, lubricants, and waterproofing. The plant is claimed to have purgative properties and is used in Mexico as a remedy for venereal diseases. Recent information from Texas indicates that candelilla is no longer abundant in the Big Bend region where it has been exploited for its commercial properties. PHILIP J. LEYENDECKER and CECIL A. KENNEDY, New Mexico College of A. & M. A., State College, New Mexico and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Box 791, Las Cruces, New Mexico.



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