

My current Darwin Initiative Scholarship at the RBG Edinburgh "Tree diversity and conservation priorities in Peruvian seasonally dry tropical forests" (with contribution from scientists at RBG Kew and the University of Oxford) is allowing me to compile an annotated checklist of woody plants for the six main geographical areas with seasonally dry forest in Peru. The primary sources for this checklist have been:

- (1) Several bibliographic resources such as taxonomic monographs, revisions and floras, as well as floristic accounts.
- (2) Information from herbarium specimens at MOL (Universidad Nacional Agraria, Lima-Peru), K (London), E (Edinburgh) and FHO (Oxford).
- (3) On-line plant specimen data from the Missouri Botanical Garden (W3 Tropicos database), the Field Museum Chicago (Neotropical Herbarium Specimens database), International Legume Database & Information Service (ILDIS) and the International Plant Name Index (IPNI).
- (4) Comments and suggestions from taxonomists working on Peruvian plant species.

The first results indicate there is a high degree of diversity and endemism in the Marañón inter-Andean valley in northern Peru, as compared to other traditional dry forest areas such as in northwestern coastal Peru. This has serious implications since no area in the dry Marañón valley has conservation or protected areas, and is under similar threat as the much more publicized seasonally dry tropical forests of Tumbes and Piura. The checklist, which will be published as a free searchable internet database, will allow researchers, NGOs, as well as conservation related decision makers in Peru to have up-to-date information on the taxonomy, status, ecology and distribution of the woody species of these ecosystems.

The project during the scholarship has integrated very well with my previous work on Peruvian seasonally dry tropical forests ecology, biogeography and conservation. This has led to the development of a webpage about these forest formations in the Neotropics, with emphasis on Peru, providing general information as well as bibliographic references, images and links to other internet sources covering seasonally dry tropical forests. More information can be found at "Bosques Tropicales Estacionalmente Secos" (http://bosque_seco.tripod.com).