

## GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF BLACKBERRY SPECIES (*RUBUS*, *ROSACEAE*) NATIVE TO BRAZIL

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Wild blackberries (*Rubus* L., Rosaceae) are rustic plants known by their fruits, which can be consumed fresh or used in the production of pulp, jams and juices. Blackberries are also popularly known by its medicinal and therapeutic properties. Although native species occur in Brazil, little is known about its occurrence and distribution. The information about species' geographic distribution is essential to support studies on its potential uses and to propose conservation strategies. The data used for the mapping of Brazilian wild blackberries' were obtained using information available in the SpeciesLink database. The georeferencing of the records was obtained from the collecting labels. If not available, the coordinates were obtained using the Google Earth software version 7.1.5.1557. Non identified specimens at *species level and incomplete locality records* were excluded. The occurrence maps were created using the software DIVA-GIS version 7.5. In total, 1068 occurrence records were found, with locality data and geographical coordinates checked. Seven native species of *Rubus* were registered in Brazil, occurring in the Northeast Region (BA, PE), Central-West (DF, GO), Southeast (MG, SP, ES, RJ) and South (PR, SC, RS). The native species recorded were *R. boliviensis* Focke, *R. brasiliensis* Mart, *R. erythrocladus* Mart, *R. imperialis* Cham. & Schltdl., *R. schottii* Pohl ex Focke, *R. sellowii* Cham. & Schltdl. and *R. urticifolius* Poir. Among the native species, *R. brasiliensis* has the widest geographical distribution, occurring in the Northeast Region (BA, PE), Central-West (DF, GO), Southeast (MG, SP, ES, RJ) and South (PR, SC, RS). The species *R. urticifolius* was registered in the regions Northeast (BA), Central-West (DF, GO), Southeast (MG, SP, ES, RJ) and South (PR, SC, RS). *Rubus erythrocladus* is an endemic species to Brazil, distributed in the regions Central-West (DF), Southeast (MG, SP, ES, RJ) and South (PR, SC, RS). *Rubus sellowii* was registered in the regions Northeast (BA), Southeast (MG, SP, ES) and South (PR, SC, RS), while *R. imperialis* was registered in the regions Northeast (BA), Central-West (DF), Southeast (ES, MG, SP) and South (PR, RS). The species *R. boliviensis* and *R. schottii* were recorded strictly in the states of Minas Gerais and São Paulo, respectively. The low number of records and the restrict occurrence to those regions indicate the possibility of rarity and endemism of these species, respectively, suggesting the need for directed conservation efforts. The areas with higher species diversity are the mountain regions in the Paraná state, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul, characterized by temperate and subtropical or high latitude tropical climate. The wild blackberries present wide distribution in mild climate regions of Brazil, commonly associated to mountain areas, although it may occur in different environments with lower frequency or abundance. Seven species are native to Brazil with diversity center in the Southeast and South Region of the country, from which some species appear as rare (*R. boliviensis*) or endemic (*R. erythrocladus*, *R. schottii*). The mapping of wild blackberries distribution will contribute to future studies on its potential uses and help to develop strategies for its conservation. The next steps are to include new records from other databases and review the species identification in order to improve the databank and refine the information on each species geographical distribution.