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SCENTS FROM BRAZILIAN CERRADO: ANALYSIS OF THE CHEMICAL COMPOSITION OF ESSENTIAL OIL FROM LEAVES OF *MYRCIA LINEARIFOLIA* CAMBESS. (MYRTACEAE)

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Brazil is known to harbour the richest flora of the planet, about one-sixth of the total of species. Its flora is divided in several biomes, such as the savannah area, called Brazilian Cerrado. It is the second larger Brazilian biome and contains *circa* 12 000 plant species, most of them never submitted to phytochemical studies (1,2). This work is part of a research project aimed to investigate the chemical composition of aromatic plants native from Brazilian Cerrado. Herein we report the analysis of essential oil from *Myrcia linearifolia* Cambess. (Myrtaceae), an endemic herb, 50-80 cm tall, with white to pink flowers, occurring frequently in the Cerrado of Tocantins and Goias States of Brazil (3).

Leaves from several individuals of a population were collected at the ecological reserve of the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), Brasília, Brazil. A voucher specimen was deposited in the herbarium of the Genetic Resources and Biotechnology (CEN 82846). Dried leaves (628.7 g) were subjected to hydrodistillation in a Clevenger-type apparatus for 2 hours. The oil was analyzed by GC/FID and GC/MS using an Agilent 7890A GC and an Agilent 5973N MSD system, both fitted with HP-5MS fused silica capillary columns (30 m X 0.25 mm X 0.25 μ m). Carrier gas was kept at a flow of 1.0 mL/minute (hydrogen for GC/FID and helium for GC/MS). Oven temperature was programmed from 60 to 240°C at 3°C/minute. The percentage composition was obtained by normalization from FID. Oil components were identified by comparison of both mass spectra and linear retention indices with spectral library and literature (4,5).

Oil yield was 0.27%. Fifty-eight compounds were identified, corresponding to 93.8% of the oil. The major components were β -pinene (24.2%), α -pinene (14.0%), *para*-menta-2,4(8)-diene (7.1%) and spathulenol (5.6%).

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