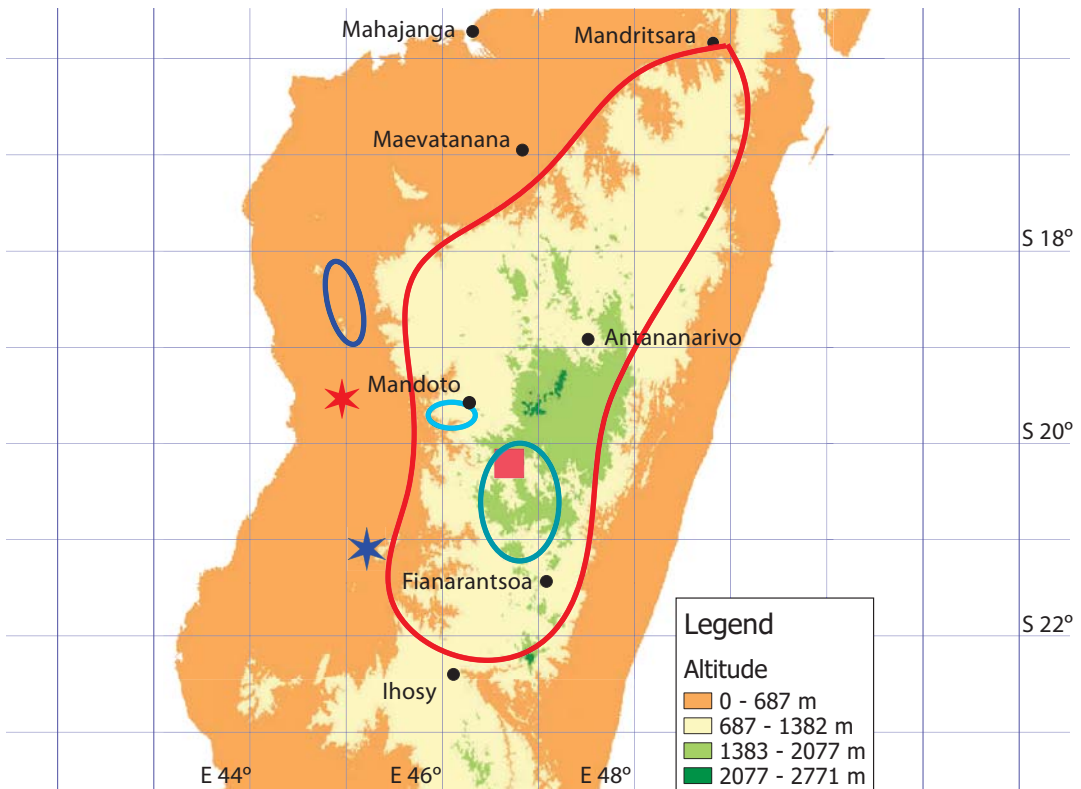


# *Pachypodium enigmaticum* – a new species in the *Densiflorum* complex

Since 2003, we have made eight trips to Madagascar to search for different localities of *Pachypodium*. One of the main purposes was to understand the variability of *Pachypodium densiflorum* Baker, and to explore its distribution, which covers a vast area mainly in the central highlands (Fig. 1), from Ihosy in the south nearly to the Makay Mountains in the southwest and up to Maevatanana-Mahajanga in the northwest and up to Mandritsara area in the northeast. Northern populations are known as var. *brevicalyx* H. Perrier. The latter are different from plants in the central mountain range of Itremo and another form that occurs at the southern limits towards Ihosy where it nearly meets *P. horombense* Poiss.

In 2003, we purchased plants of *P. densiflorum* with a flat stem and glabrous leaves, but without known natural origin from the nursery of Alfred Razafindratsira and we brought ten of these plants to the Czech Republic (CITES export permit MG Madagascar 0423C-EV11/MG03, 18.1.2003, CITES import to Czech Republic OMOB/2835/03/5). Alfred was given these plants some years ago by some collector and he believed in their natural origin. To our great surprise several of these plants flowered in early autumn and produced extraordinarily big yellow flowers up to 62 mm in diameter with a long, thin corolla tube. These flowers were different from all those we knew so far and its taxonomical position, without known distribution was a mystery to us. We also speculated about the possibility of a hybrid origin as we



1. Distributions of *Pachypodium* species discussed in the text, in central Madagascar:

— *P. densiflorum* sensu lato, — *P. enigmaticum*, \* *P. rosulatum* ssp. *bicolor*, — *P. brevicaule*, ■ *P. eburneum*, \* *P. rosulatum* ssp. *makayense*, — *P. rosulatum* ssp. *bemarahense*. Map by Petr Pavelka & Tim Harvey.