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Molecular characterization of the Andean blackberry, *Rubus glaucus*, using SSR markers

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ABSTRACT. The species *Rubus glaucus*, also known as the Andean or "Castilla" blackberry, is one of nine edible species of this genus that grow naturally in Central and South America. In Colombia, this species is the most important of all *Rubus* species for agricultural and commercial purposes. We used 20 SSRs developed for other *Rubus* species to characterize 44 Colombian *R. glaucus* genotypes, collected from eight different departments, and to look for molecular differences between thornless and thorny cultivated blackberries. Eighty-two bands were obtained from 28 loci. The genotypes were classified into eight populations, corresponding to collection sites. The mean number of polymorphic alleles per locus in all populations and genotypes ranged from 1.857 to 2.393. Samples collected from Valle del Cauca, Quindío, Caldas, and Risaralda departments had the highest heterozygosity values. The finding of exclusive bands from *R. glaucus* genotypes from Valle del Cauca, Quindío, and Caldas demonstrates genetic and molecular differentiation between thorny and thornless Andean blackberries.

Key words: Microsatellites; SSRs; *Rubus glaucus*; Colombia; Molecular characterization; Thornless blackberry

