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Contribution to the Systematic Study of the Ornamental Flora of Gorée Island (Dakar-Senegal)

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Abstract

Gorée Island, located approximately 4.5 km off the coast of Dakar, is both an island in the North Atlantic Ocean and one of the 19 boroughs of Senegal's capital city. This emblematic site has been widely studied in fields such as archaeology, geology, history, and tourism. However, its ornamental flora has received very little scientific attention. This is particularly concerning given that recent decades have been marked by the depletion of its natural resources due to numerous human activities combined with urban expansion and climate change. It is therefore crucial to improve scientific knowledge of Gorée Island's ornamental flora to support sustainable and participatory management. This study, conducted in September 2021, aims to

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contribute to a broader understanding of Gorée's ornamental flora. More specifically, this study aims to establish the taxonomic, biological, and chorological profiles of the ornamental flora of Gorée. The methodological approach consisted of conducting a field survey in the three gardens (Canary Garden, Public Garden, and Succulent Plant Garden) and the flowerbeds of the municipality. The results showed that 55 plant species belonging to 49 genera, grouped into 31 families, were identified. Of these species, 36 are already listed in the flora of Senegal, while the remaining 13 have not been recorded and could be introduced to Senegal. This flora is composed exclusively of angiosperms, with three dominant families: Apocynaceae (9.09%), Acanthaceae (7.27%), and Asparagaceae (7.2%). In terms of biological types, Phanerophytes are the most represented (50.91%), followed by Chamaephytes (20%). Chorologically, the flora is dominated by pantropical species, which account for 34.55% of the species mentioned, compared to 21.82% for other African-American species.

Conclusion and application: This work has allowed us to characterize the ornamental flora of Gorée Island. Indeed, the structure of the flora, as well as its taxonomic, biological, and chorological spectra, has been determined. The results of this study can be used to develop tools for taxon identification (identification key).

Keywords: Flora, Ornamental, Characterization, Management, Gorée

Introduction

Gorée Island, located about 4.5 km off the coast of Dakar, is both an island in the North Atlantic Ocean and one of the 19 municipal districts of Senegal's capital city. It is a symbolic site of remembrance of the transatlantic slave trade in Africa. The island was designated a historic site in 1944, with protective measures implemented in 1951 (during the colonial era). It was subsequently inscribed on the national heritage list in 1975 (Decree No. 012771 of November 17, 1975) and on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1978 (DEEC, 2022).

This iconic Senegalese territory has been the focus of numerous studies spanning archaeology, history, and tourism. Furthermore, despite centuries of conquest, pillaging, and urban redevelopment (the 18th century), the area currently occupied by the Adanson Public Garden has remained largely intact. This garden has nonetheless evolved, adapting to different configurations and functions throughout over three and a half centuries of documented urban development on Gorée Island.

However, the ornamental flora of Gorée Island has received little scientific investigation. Recent decades have been characterized by the depletion of its natural resources due to numerous human activities combined

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with urban expansion and climate change (MEED, 2014). The impact of these constraints is clearly visible today, especially as a result of climate change. Thus, the quality of the living environment is now recognized as crucial to the physical and psychological well-being of populations, which highlights the importance of ornamental plants as they also play a significant role in improving the living environment. It is therefore essential to enhance scientific knowledge about the ornamental flora of Gorée Island in order to support sustainable and participatory management.

This study was undertaken to enhance the overall understanding of the ornamental flora of Gorée Island. Specifically, it aims to characterize its taxonomic, biological, and chorological composition.

Materials and Methods

Presentation of the study area

The studies were conducted in three gardens (the Canary Garden, the Public Garden, and the Succulent Garden) as well as along other pathways on Gorée Island, located in the Bay of Dakar. These themed gardens contribute to the beautification of the living environment and also provide spaces for recreation and community gatherings. Gorée is one of the 19 boroughs of the capital of Senegal. It is a symbolic site of remembrance of the transatlantic slave trade in Africa, officially recognized by the United Nations (UN) in 1978. Gorée, the "memory island" of this tragedy, was thus one of the very first sites to be inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

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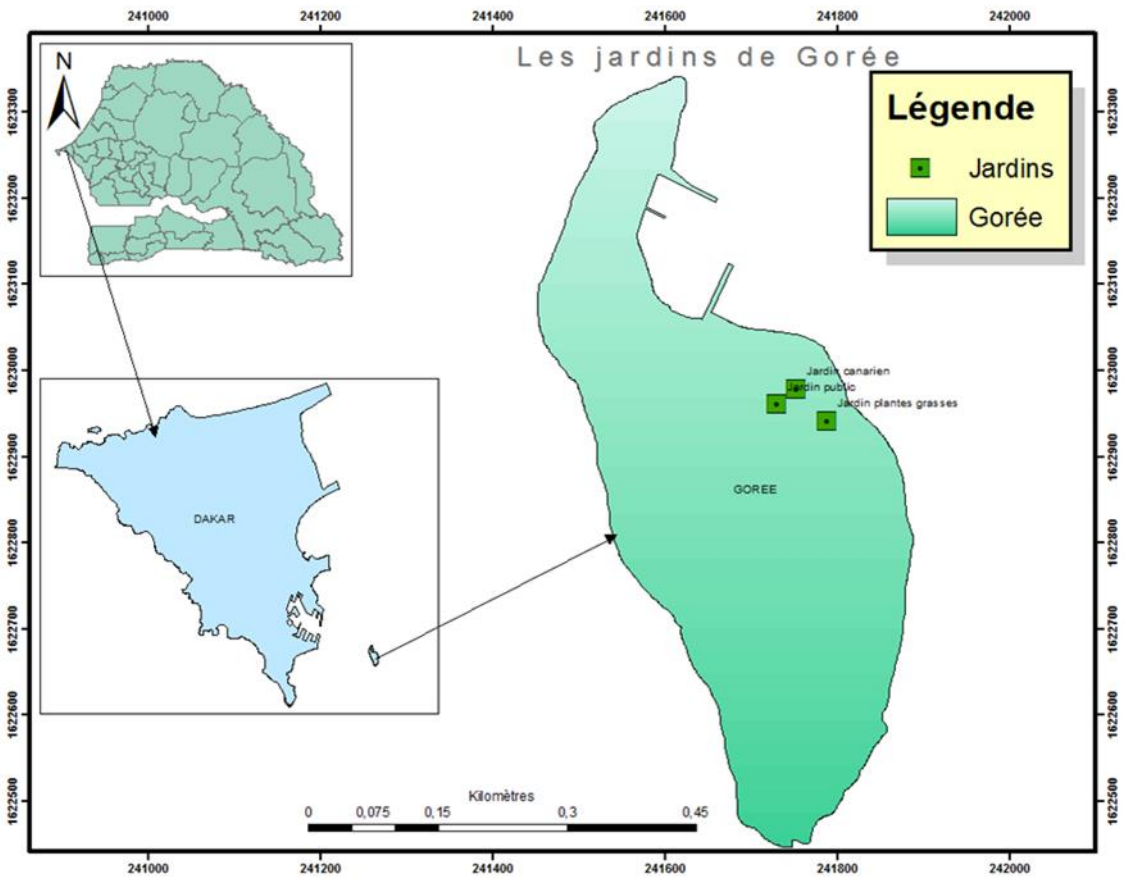

Figure 1: Map showing the location of the Canary Garden, the Public Garden, and the Succulent Garden

Methods

Equipment

The following equipment was required to complete this work:

- A GPS device to obtain the geographical coordinates of the gardens;
- Floristic inventory sheets to record the present species in the different gardens;
- Notebooks, pencils and erasers for taking notes;
- Pruning shears for collecting samples;
- A press for preserving and drying samples;
- A digital camera for taking pictures of ornamental plants

The following books and websites were used for species identification:

- Flora of Senegal (Berhaut, 1967),
- Flora of West Tropical Africa (Hutchinson & Dalziel, 1954, 1958, 1963, 1968, 1972)

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- Catalogue of vascular plants of Burkina Faso (Thiombiano et *al*., 2012).
- Master's and PhD theses from the Laboratory of Botany and Biodiversity: Photo libraries of Dieng (2014 and 2019).

Data Collection

The floral inventory

The inventory was conducted through a field survey, which consisted of traversing the area in all directions, recording all plant species encountered. For each plant, its botanical characteristics were described on site and its common name was recorded. Once at the laboratory, the botanical characteristics of each plant were compared with those described in the available documentation. After identification, each species was assigned its scientific name, and the description of its botanical characteristics was finalized.

Data Processing

Analysis of the flora structure

To analyze the structure of the ornamental flora of Gorée Island, taxonomic, biological and chorological composition were examined.

Taxonomic spectrum

After compiling the floristic list, the taxonomic spectrum shows the distribution of species across different taxonomic ranks (genus, family, class, etc.). Determining the taxonomic spectrum made it possible to establish the number of species, genera, and families recorded and to identify the dominant taxa at each taxonomic rank.

The nomenclature used follows the database managed by the Conservatory and Botanical Garden (CJB) of Geneva; this database is based on the seminal work of Lebrun and Stork (1991-1997) and is accessible on the following regularly updated website:
http://www.ville-ge.ch/musinfo/bd/cjb/africa/index.php?langue=fr
The taxonomic classification used is that of APG III (2009).

Biological spectrum

The biological spectrum shows the distribution of species among different biological forms. These forms refer to "the set of morphological characteristics that play a role in resistance to adverse conditions, and therefore in the localization of plant species" (Serge et *al*., 2015). Raunkier's (1934) biological types are adapted to the intertropical zone where the

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unfavorable season corresponds to the dry season (Lebrun, 1966). This classification distinguishes eight biological forms, which are:

- phanerophytes (Ph): woody plants whose buds are located more than 50 cm above the ground;
- chamaephytes (C): perennial woody or herbaceous plants, rooted, whose regenerative buds are located near the ground, below 50 cm;
- hemicryptophytes (He): rooted plants whose bud is located on the surface of the soil, and whose aerial part dies during the unfavorable season;
- geophytes (Ge): plants whose bud is well buried in the soil;
- therophytes (Th): plants that survive the unfavorable season in the form of seeds;
- Parasites (Par): plants that draw water, mineral salts and/or photosynthates from other plants (functional parasitism).

The distribution of the recorded species according to Raunkier's (1934) biological types was based on a synthesis of information on species biological types from the work of Berhaut (1971; 1988), Hutchinson et *al*., (2014), and Thiombiano et *al*., (2012). Thus, the biological spectrum was first established at the overall level, without distinguishing individual sites, and was then determined separately for each site.

For the evaluation and interpretation of the results, the percentage of each biological type was calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Frequency of a given biological type (\%):} \quad \frac{\text{Number of species of the biological type in question}}{\text{Total number of species}} \text{ X 100}$$

Chorological spectrum

The chorological spectrum shows the distribution of recorded species across the various regions of the biosphere. To establish it, each species was assigned to a phytogeographical type based on the regions where it was recorded. The phytogeographical types used are based on the major chorological subdivisions established for Africa by White (1986), the main ones are:

- Cosmopolitans (Cos): species found in both tropical and non-tropical regions;
- Pantropical (Pt): species widespread in Africa, America, tropical Asia and Australia (intertropical regions);
- Paleotropical (Pal): species found in Africa and tropical Asia as well as in Madagascar and Australia (tropical zones of the Old World);
- African American (Am): species found in Africa and tropical America;

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- African American and Australian (Amu);
- Afro-Asians (As);
- Afro-Asian and Subtropical (AsT);
- Afro-tropical (AT): species distributed throughout tropical Africa;
- Pantropical and Mediterranean (Pt-Me);
- Afro-Malagasy (AM): species distributed in Africa and Madagascar;
- Afro-Malagasy and Asian (Mas);

The phytogeographic distribution of the species identified was synthesized from the chorological information provided in the work of Berhaut (1971-1988), Hutchinson et *al*., (2014) and Thiombiano et *al*., (2012). It was established using the following formula.

$$\text{Frequency of a given phytogeographical type (\%)} = \frac{\text{Number of species of the phytogeographical type in question}}{\text{Total number of species}} \times 100$$

Results and Discussion

Qualitative Analysis

Overall structure of the flora

Table 1 summarizes the results on the list of species inventoried in the three (3) gardens. For each species, its presence or absence in the flora of Senegal, its geographical distribution, and its biological type were noted.

Fifty-five (55) species belonging to 49 genera grouped into 31 families were recorded in the gardens of Gorée Island. Among these ornamental species, 36 have already been cited in the flora of Senegal, while the remaining 19 have not been listed and could be introduced to Senegal.

Table 1: List of species inventoried on Gorée Island

Family	Sub-family	NG	NS	*Espèces*	FS	BT	GR
Acanthaceae (D)		3	4	*Pseuderanthemum carruthersii* (Seem.) Guillaumin	-	C	As
				Pseuderanthemum carruthersii var. reticulatum (W.Bull) Fosberg	-	C	Pt
				Ruellia tuberosa L.	-	C	Am
				Asystasia gangetica (L.) T. Anderson	+	C	Amu
Agavaceae (M)		1	1	*Agave sisalana* L.	+	P	Pt
Aloeaceae (M)		1	1	*Aloe vera* (L.) Burm.f	+	H	Cosm
Amaranthaceae (D)		1	1	*Alternanthera brasiliana* (L.) Kuntze	-	C	Pt
Amaryllidaceae (M)		2	2	*Crinum amabile* Donn ex Kew Gawler.	-	G	Pt

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Family	Sub-family	NG	NS	*Espèces*	FS	BT	GR
				Hymenocallis speciosa (L. f. ex Salisb.) Salisb.	-	G	As
Apocynaceae (D)	Apocynoideae	4	4	*Catharanthus roseus* (L.) G. Don	+	C	Pt
				Nerium oleander L.	+	P	Pt
				Saba senegalensis (A. DC.) Pichon	+	P	Af
				Thevetia neriifolia Juss. Ex Steud.	+	P	Pt
	Asclepioideae	1	1	*Calotropis procera* Ait	+	P	Pt
Araceae (D)		1	1	*Philodendron lacerrum* (Jacq.) Schott.	-	Np	Am
Araliaceae (D)		1	3	*Polyscias balfouriana* (André) L.H.Bailey	-	Np	Mas
				Polyscias guilfoylei Cogn.et March.	+	P	Pt
				Polyscias guilfoylei. Var.laciniata L.H. Bailey.	+	P	Mas
Arecaceae (M)		3	3	*Phoenix dactylifera* L.	+	P	As-T
				Pritchardia pacifica Seem. Et Wendl.	+	P	Af-Poly
				Washingtonia filifera (Linden ex André) H.Wendl.	+	P	Am
Asparagaceae (M)		2	4	*Sansevieria cylindrica* W.B	-	G	Af
				Sansevieria trifasciata Prain.	-	G	Af
				Sansevieria trifasciata (De Wild.) NEBr. *Var laurentii*	-	G	Af
				Yucca elephantipes Lem.	-	P	Am
Boraginaceae (D)		1	1	*Cordia sebestena* L.	-	P	Pt
Cacataceae (D)		3	3	*Echinocactus grusonii* Hildm.	-	Np	Am
				Nopalea cochenillifera (L.) Salm -Dyck	+	C	Am
				Opuntia tuna (L.) Mill	+	P	Amu
Casuarinaceae (D)		1	1	*Casuarina equisetifolia* L.	+	P	Pt
Combretaceae (D)		1	1	*Terminalia catapa* L.	+	P	Pt
Commelinaceae (M)		2	2	*Tradescantia pallida* (Rose) D.R. Hunt	-	C	Am
				Tradescantia spathacea SW.	+	C	Am
Cyperaceae (M)		1	1	*Cyperus alternifolius* L	+	G	Cosm

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Family	Sub-family	NG	NS	*Espèces*	FS	BT	GR
Euphorbiaceae (D)		3	3	*Elaephorbia drupifera* (Thonn.) Stapf	+	P	Af
				Euphorbia lactea Haw	+	Np	As
				Pedilanthus tithymaloides (Linn.) Poit.	+	C	Am
Heliconiaceae (D)		1	1	*Heliconia bihai* (L) L.	-	P	Am
Lamiaceae D)		2	2	*Ocimum basilicum* L.	+	T	Cosm
				Volkameria inermis L.	-	Np	As
Lythraceae (D)		1	1	*Punica granatum* L.	-	P	Pt-Me
Malvaceae (D)	Bombacoideae	1	1	*Adansonia digitata* L.	+	P	Ma
	Malvoideae	1	1	*Hibiscus Rosa sinensis* L.	+	P	Ma
Meliaceae (D)		1	1	*Azadirachta indica* L.	+	P	Pt
Moraceae (D)		1	1	*Ficus retusa* L.	+	P	Pt
Moringaceae (D)		1	1	*Moringa oleifera* Lam.	+	Np	Pt
Nyctaginaceae (D)		2	3	*Bougainvillea glabra* Choisy.	+	P	Pt
				Bougainvillea spectabilis Willd.	+	P	Pt
				Mirabilis jalapa L.	+	T	Cosm
Oleaceae (D)		1	1	*Jasminum sambac* (Linn.), Aiton	+	P	AsT
Passifloraceae (D)		1	1	*Turnera ulmifolia* L.	-	C	Pt
Plumbaginaceae (D)		1	1	*Plumbago auriculata* Thunb.	+	H	Pt
Polygonaceae (D)		1	1	*Coccoloba uvifera* (L.) L.	+	P	As-Am
Sapotaceae (D)		1	1	*Manilkara zapota* (L.) P. Royen	+	P	Am
Strelitziaceae (M)		1	1	*Ravenala madagascariensis* Gmel. J.F.	+	P	Ma
Total		**49**	**55**				

Legend: NG (Number of genera), NE (Number of species), FS (Flora of Senegal), + (presence) and - (absence), D (dicotyledons), M (monocotyledons); BT: Phanerophytes (P), Nanophanerophytes (Np), Chamaephytes (C), Hemicryptophytes (H), Geophytes (G), Therophytes (T); GR (Geographic Distribution), African (Af), African American (Am), American (Am), African American and Asian (Am As), Afro-Asian (As), Afro-Malagasy and Asian (Mas), and Pantropical (Pt). TB (Biological type), P (Phanerophytes), G (Geophytes), C (Chamaephytes), H (Hemicryptophytes), T (Therophytes)

Taxonomic spectrum

Table 2 provides information on the taxonomic spectrum of the ornamental flora of Gorée Island.

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This flora is 100% dominated by angiosperms (Table 2). Among these angiosperms, dicotyledons are dominant with 70.97% of families, 75.51% of genera and 72.73% of species.

Table 2: Taxonomic spectrum

Taxonomic Groups	Families		Genres		Species	
	Nb	Proportion (%)	Nb	Proportion (%)	Nb	Proportion (%)
Dicotyledons	22	70.97	37	75.51	40	72.73
Monocotyledons	9	29.03	12	24.49	15	27.27
TOTAL	**31**	**100.00**	**49**	**100.00**	**55**	**100.00**

Nb = number

Table 3 shows the distribution of the species inventoried by family in the three (3) gardens of Gorée Island.

The analysis reveals that this flora is dominated by three families: Apocynaceae (9.09%), followed by Acanthaceae (7.27%) and Asparagaceae (7.27%), which together account for 23.64% of the flora. However, five other families are also relatively well represented, each accounting for 5.45%: Araliaceae, Arecaceae, Cacataceae, Euphorbiaceae, and Nyctaginaceae (Table 3). The remaining 23 families comprise 49.09% of the flora.

Table 3: Distribution of species by ornamental family

Familles	Nombre d'espèces	Proportion (%)
Apocynaceae (D)	5	9,09
Acanthaceae (D)	4	7,27
Asparagaceae (M)	4	7,27
Araliaceae (D)	3	5,45
Arecaceae (M)	3	5,45
Cacataceae (D)	3	5,45
Euphorbiaceae (D)	3	5,45
Nyctaginaceae (D)	3	5,45
Amaryllidaceae (M)	2	3,64
Commelinaceae (M)	2	3,64
Lamiaceae D)	2	3,64
Malvaceae (D)	2	3,64
Agavaceae (M)	1	1,82
Aloeaceae (M)	1	1,82
Amaranthaceae (D)	1	1,82
Araceae (D)	1	1,82
Boraginaceae (D)	1	1,82
Casuarinaceae (D)	1	1,82
Combretaceae (D)	1	1,82
Cyperaceae (M)	1	1,82
Heliconiaceae (D)	1	1,82
Lythraceae (D)	1	1,82
Meliaceae (D)	1	1,82
Moraceae (D)	1	1,82
Moringaceae (D)	1	1,82
Oleaceae (D)	1	1,82

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Familles	Nombre d'espèces	Proportion (%)
Passifloraceae (D)	1	1,82
Plumbaginaceae (D)	1	1,82
Polygonaceae (D)	1	1,82
Sapotaceae (D)	1	1,82
Strelitziaceae (M)	1	1,82
TOTAL	**55**	**100,00**

Biological Spectrum

Figure 2 presents the biological types of species in the three gardens on Gorée Island. Analysis of Figure 2 shows that Phanerophytes are the most represented, accounting for 50.91% of the flora, followed by Chamaephytes (20%). Geophytes and Nanophanerophytes each account for 10.91%. Hemicryptophytes and Therophytes each represent 3.64% of the recorded species.

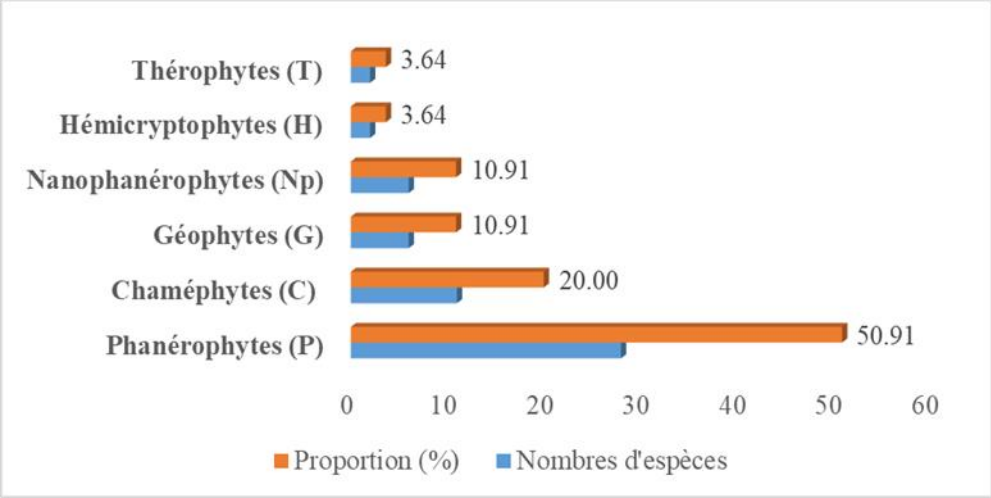

Figure 2 : Biological types of species

Chorological spectrum

Data on the distribution of species according to their geographical affinities are recorded in Table 4. This ornamental flora is dominated by pantropical species, which account for 34.55% of the species listed. These are followed by Afro-American and African species, accounting for 21.82% and 9.09%, respectively. In contrast, the Afro-Asian and cosmopolitan species are relatively well represented, each accounting for 7.27% of the flora.

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Table 4 : Chorological spectrum

Biogeographical affinities	Number of species	Proportion (%)
Pantropical species (Pt)	19	34.55
African American (Am) species	12	21.82
African species (Af)	5	9.09
Afro-Asian species (As)	4	7.27
Cosmopolitan species (Cosm)	4	7.27
Afro-Malagasy species (Ma)	3	5.45
Tropical Afro-Asian Species (AsT)	2	3.64
Afro-Malagasy and Asian species (Mas)	2	3.64
African and Polynesian (Af-Poly) species	1	1.82
Pantropical and Mediterranean (Pt-Me) species	1	1.82
African American and Australian (Amu) species	1	1.82
Afro-Asian and American (As Am) species	1	1.82
TOTAL	**55**	**100.00**

Discussion

The species diversity of the gardens and pathways of Gorée includes 55 species. This figure is lower than that of Dieng (2019) and Sagna (2019), who recorded 225 and 160 ornamental species, respectively, in Dakar and Mbour. This difference in floristic richness can be explained by the fact that the 2019 inventory was conducted in 84 horticultural sites in the Dakar region, whereas for this study, only three gardens and the small pathways of the Gorée municipality were visited. Furthermore, Dakar and Mbour are the main cities where floral activity has been rising in recent years. However, this figure is higher than that of Fall (2023), who recorded 44 species in the green spaces of Gorée. Moreover, 34.54% of these ornamental species are not present in the vascular and illustrated flora of Senegal. This could be explained by the fact that floriculture is one of the main drivers of the introduction of invasive plants throughout the world (Reichard et *al*., 2001; Bell et *al*., 2003; Dehnen-Schmutz et *al*., 2007; Burt et *al*., 2007).

From a taxonomic diversity perspective, the ornamental flora of the Gorée commune is dominated by dicotyledons (70.97%) and monocotyledons (29.03%). These angiosperms comprise 49 genera belonging to 31 families. These results corroborate those of Dieng (2019), Sagna (2019), and Gaye (2018), who also noted a dominance of dicotyledons of 63.11%, 65.63% and 78.94%. Furthermore, it should be noted that perennial species are by far the most common, representing 96.36% of the ornamental flora. Annual species, on the other hand, account for only 3.64% of the species recorded. These results are similar to those of Dieng (2019) and Sagna (2019), who also showed that perennial species are by far the most prevalent, at 93.33% and 94.38%, respectively. This similarity could be explained by the fact that these perennial species are better adapted to local climatic conditions or better suited to landscaping needs. Moreover, seasonal ornamental plants are not widely

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cultivated by Senegalese nursery growers due to their high maintenance costs. Municipalities, hotels, and private clients also seek perennial ornamental species that offer year-round greenery and do not require seasonal maintenance.

Regarding biogeographical affinities, the ornamental flora of Gorée, like that of most Senegalese cities (Dakar, Mbour) and other African cities, is dominated by exotic taxa. Only 9.09% of the recorded species originate from the African continent, and approximately 36 species are reported in the flora of Senegal. The remaining 19 have not been recorded and can therefore be considered newly introduced species to Senegal through floriculture. The increased importance of pantropical species seems linked to Senegal's more westerly and oceanic geographical position (Dieng, 2014; Dieng, 2019). It is likely that these species are better adapted to Senegal's bioclimatic conditions than some strictly African species.

Conclusion

This study aimed to contribute to a better understanding of the ornamental flora of Gorée Island and identified 55 species belonging to 49 genera of 31 families. This flora is entirely dominated by angiosperms, with dicotyledons representing the majority (70.97% of families, 75.51% of genera, and 72.73% of species). It is characterized by the predominance of three families: Apocynaceae (9.09%), Acanthaceae (7.27%), and Asparagaceae (7.27%), accounting for 23.64% of the flora. Biologically, Phanerophytes clearly dominate the flora, accounting for 50.91% of the identified species, followed by Chamaephytes (20%). Regarding geographical distribution, pantropical species dominate, accounting 34.55% of the species cited, followed by Afro-American and African species with 21.82% and 9.09%, respectively. This work has allowed us to characterize the ornamental flora of Gorée Island. Indeed, the structure of the flora, as well as its taxonomic, biological, and chorological spectra, has been determined.The results of this study can be used to develop tools for identifying taxa (identification keys).

Conflict of Interest: The authors reported no conflict of interest.

Data Availability: All data are included in the content of the paper.

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