



Ferns and Lycophytes as new challenges

Editorial

Claudine Massi Mynssen^{1,3} & Lana da Silva Sylvestre²

This special volume dedicated to lycophytes and ferns in *Rodriguésia* turns up at a very important time. Our country has never before had such a significant number of researchers in these groups of plants, in the most diverse knowledge areas.

Our “pteridoflora” has been studied since the beginning of the Brazilian colonial period, resulting in monumental literature such as *Synopsis Filicum Brasiliensium* (Raddi 1819), *Icones Plantarum Cryptogamicarum* (Martius 1828–1834), *Flora brasiliensis* [vol. 1 part 2] (Martius 1840–1884), *Cyptogames Vasculaires du Brésil* (Fée 1869, 1872–1873), among others. However, more detailed studies developed by researchers based in Brazil only gained prominence in the mid-20th century. Alexander Kurt Brade (1881–1971) can be considered one of the great pioneers in this endeavor. Having born in Germany, he lived in Rio de Janeiro where he worked at the Museu Nacional and the Jardim Botânico do Rio de Janeiro. After his retirement, he went to São Paulo, where he worked at the Instituto de Botânica. An internationally recognized expert, he published a series of relevant works from 1920 to 1971, including a posthumous publication in 1972.

However, Brade’s legacy bore fruit. A young Brazilian, born in São Caetano do Sul (SP), was interested in learning more about these plants having the opportunity to follow Brade’s work in his last years of activity. This apprentice was Dr. Paulo G. Windisch, who later developed his PhD at Harvard University, under the guidance of Dr. Rolla M. Tryon.

We can say that from this moment on one of the largest “lineages” of pteridologists in Brazil was established. Most of us, directly or indirectly, are academic descendants of Dr. Paulo Windisch, to whom we express all our gratitude and to whom we kindly dedicate this special volume.

In addition, it is important to highlight the contribution of Father Aloysio Sehnem, who published between 1967 and 1984 the volumes of *Flora Ilustrada Catarinense* which were dedicated to ferns and lycophytes, becoming, for a long time, one of the main national reference works for identifying these groups of plants. We also highlight the contribution to the knowledge of ferns in the Brazilian Northeast made by Dr. Iva Carneiro Leão Barros, who is a great trainer of researchers in these groups of plants.

The content of this special volume comprises 24 original articles and four scientific notes, in the most diverse areas of knowledge, with lycophytes and/or ferns as the protagonists of these studies. There are 12 articles on flora and taxonomy, seven on structural botany, seven on ecology, and two on gametophyte morphogenesis. We have a total of 104 national and international authors. Colleagues from Argentina, Honduras, and the United States are also represented here, joining efforts in disseminating data on Latin American pteridology.

We would like to highlight our sincere thanks to *Rodriguésia*’s editorial board. We also express our gratitude to the reviewers who donated their time and knowledge to contribute to the quality of the works presented here.

¹ Instituto de Pesquisas Jardim Botânico do Rio de Janeiro, Jardim Botânico, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil. ORCID: <<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1071-4707>>.

² Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Inst. Biologia, Depto. Botânica, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil. ORCID: <<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0486-0898>>.

³ Author for correspondence: cmynssen@gmail.com

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