**Patterns of communities of corticolous lichens in the dry forest of Valle del Cauca**

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The abstract – The tropical dry forest (TDF) is one of the most endangered ecosystems of the Neotropic, with only 5% of the original coverage. The objective of this study is to evaluate the distribution patterns of the cortical lichen communities of the Valle del Cauca TDF. Ten permanent 50x20 m plots were established in ten relics of dry forest. In each plot, 50 phorophytes were selected, belonging to five species (10 individuals per species). Three quadrants of 30x20 cm acetate were sampled in each phorophyte, corresponding to three strata: <1 m, 1-2 m and> 2m. Parameters such as Diameter at breast height, height, temperature and relative humidity were measured. Preliminary results show about 200 species of lichens, with dominance of costrose species. No preference for phorophyte has been detected, but there are differences between the relics of dry forest.

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR LICHENOLOGY: WELCOME LETTER**

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It is our great pleasure to welcome you to the 9th International Association for Lichenology Symposium (IAL 9), which will be held from August 2 to 7, 2020 in Bonito, Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil. I’d like to personally welcome each of you to the most important event for the Lichenological community. It’s an exciting time for thestudy of lichensas we are confronting a time of many changes and we’re meeting these changes during a time of larger nation-wide and global change as well. This is the first time our conference will be held in the Southern Hemisphere and specifically in Latin America. The world of Lichenology is an exciting area in which to work, and we’ll continue to meet and bring inspired people together in forums like this, to ensure our conferences remain at the cutting edge. Throughout this conference, I ask you all to stay engaged, keep us proactive and help us shape the future of Lichenology. I’d like to thank each of your for attending our conference and bringing your expertise to our meeting. You, as organization leaders, have the vision, the knowledge, the wherewithal and the experience to help us pave our way into the future. We could not accomplish what we do without your support and leadership. Also you, dear students, are truly our greatest asset today and tomorrow. My personal respect and thanks go out to all of you. Welcome to Brazil! Welcome to Bonito! We look forward to seeing you here in 2020. Funding: NK (FUNDECT, UFMS), MDF (Peter Buck Fellowship, NMNH-SI).