**CUBAN LICHENS: HISTORY, DIVERSITY, AND CURRENT KNOWLEDGE**

**Robert Lücking**

Botanischer Garten und Botanisches Museum, Freie Universität Berlin, Königin-Luise-Straße 6–8, 14195 Berlin, Germany. Email: r.luecking@bgbm.org

**Bibiana Moncada**

Licenciatura en Biología, Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Cra. 4 No. 26D-54, Torre de Laboratorios, Herbario, Bogotá D.C., Colombia; current address: Botanischer Garten und Botanisches Museum, Freie Universität Berlin, Königin-Luise-Straße 6–8, 14195 Berlin, Germany. Email: bibianamoncada@gmail.com

**Joel Alejandro Mercado-Díaz**

Committee on Evolutionary Biology, University of Chicago, 1025 E 57th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637, USA; Integrative Research Center, The Field Museum, 1400 South Lake Shore, Chicago, IL 60605, USA. Email: jmercado@fieldmuseum.org

**Carlos Viñas**

Jardín Botánico Nacional, Carretera del Rocío km 3½, Calabazar, 19230 Habana, Cuba. Email: carlosvip@fbio.uh.cu

Cuba is the largest and biologically most diverse island in the Caribbean. Given its political background, it has been less impacted by land use change and urbanization than other Caribbean islands. Numerous areas under permanent protection encompass most of the unique ecosystems present in the island. As a result, the lichen biota is comparatively well-preserved, allowing a glimpse into the diversity and uniqueness of lichen communities in Caribbean island ecosystems, in Cuba driven by a marked longitudinal gradient from the dry western to the moist eastern parts. Historically, Cuba has been one of the centers of attention in the study of tropical lichens, particularly crustose microlichens, due to the work by Camille Montagne, extensive collections by the North American botanist Charles Wright, studied mostly by Edward Tuckerman, William Nylander and Jean Müller, and contributions by Maurice Bouly de Lesdain, based on collections by Brother Hioram. In contrast, few modern inventories exist, the most important one on foliicolous lichens by Antonín Vězda. Resident Cuban lichenology developed only recently, with a focus on applied aspects and ecology, for instance by Dania Rosabal. A first checklist was published in 1984 by Margitta Pluntke, enumerating 1,124 taxa. In 2016, lichens were added to the *Flora de la República de Cuba* project, spearheaded by the Botanischer Garten und Botanisches Museum (BGBM) in Berlin and the Jardín Botánico Nacional (JBN) in Havanna, complemented by a Caribbean survey by Joel Mercado-Díaz (Field Museum, Chicago), in collaboration with the Centro Oriental de Ecosistemas y Biodiversidad (BIOECO) in Santiago de Cuba. The updated checklist currently contains 2,370 entries, corresponding to 1,027 species. Of the over 1,500 heterotypic names reported, 30% are based on Cuban type material. The new inventory work, supported by molecular phylogenetic analyses, has already revealed many new taxa, including the enigmatic new genus *Saxiloba*.