

New York, February 28th 2020

IAPT
Research Grants Awards Committee

Dear Committee Members,

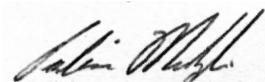
With this letter I wish to express my support for the application of Rafael Rosenstock Voltz for the IAPT Grant Award.

Rafael has chosen for his dissertation to work on the subfamily Olisbeoideae, a challenging group within the Melastomataceae. This is probably the least-known clade of Neotropical Melastomataceae because most species are trees found in low numbers, they have a short flowering season, and are not as distinctive as the rest of the members of the family. This has resulted both in low numbers of herbarium collections and often very fragmentary material. Moreover, no specialist has worked on the group in the last 40 years, which means that a high proportion of specimens are either not determined to species or have mistaken identifications.

Rafael's experience as a field and herbarium botanist will be key to tackle the systematics and a revised taxonomy for the group. His previous work on Sapotaceae, also a group with low density of trees and few collections makes him ideal to tackle the group. While he will need a broader geographical sampling in the future, the portion presented here for collecting in Brazilian Amazonia near Manaus is an ideal start for the project as almost 20% of the species diversity of the clade is present in the area. This will allow him to get a very good start in understanding morphological and ecological variation within the genus. I have no doubts that the IAPT funds will be a great seed to the start of a successful dissertation.

If you have any further questions about this letter or other aspects of this research, please do not hesitate to contact me (fabian@nybg.org).

Sincerely,



Fabian A. Michelangeli, Ph. D.
Abess Curator of Tropical Botany
Institute of Systematic Botany