

New York, February 28th 2020

IAPT
Research Grants Awards Committee

Dear Committee Members,

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter of support for Diego Paredes-Burneo's application to the IAPT Grant Award.

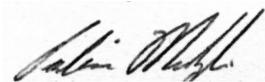
I have known Diego for over seven years, when he accompanied me for a three-week long field trip in Northern Peru to collect Melastomataceae. Since then, we have been together on four other expeditions throughout Peru and collaborated on different aspects of systematics and taxonomy of Melastomataceae. I also informally advised him in his Master's thesis on a revision of the Melastomataceae of the Province of Piura in Northern Peru, and sponsored him on a two-month long visit to the New York Botanical Garden to work in the herbarium. As a result of these interactions we have co-authored two publications and are collaborating on a couple of other manuscripts. Throughout this time and these interactions I have gotten to know Diego really well, so I make this recommendation without hesitation.

Diego is now a Doctoral student at Louisiana State University and the project he presents here takes advantage of his taxonomic knowledge of *Brachyotum* (Melastomataceae), to answer broader questions on animal-plant interactions and the orogeny of the Andes in plant evolution. *Brachyotum* is a great model system to answer these questions because all the species in the genus are pollinated by hummingbirds and a typical element of the Andean forests and high elevation environments, but close relatives are bee-pollinated and found at lower elevations.

Diego is a careful taxonomist and his knowledge goes well beyond that of Melastomataceae, having a very good understanding of the Peruvian flora, as a result of years of field work throughout the country working on a variety of projects and consulting jobs. This combination of field experience and the support of the Lagomarsino lab at LSU will ensure that his project is successful and that IAPT funds are well spent. In short, I can't think of anyone more deserving of this award.

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,



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