

Letter of support

I hereby state that I have known Mr Fábio Araújo Silva for the last three years, since I arrived to live in Belém do Pará. Fábio was then finishing his master's thesis studying Acanthaceae, namely the genus *Justicia* for the state, and has made great progress at discovering, describing and publishing new species. He is also preparing the resulting treatment for publication and, as I become more familiar with his work, he comes through as an energetic, interested and dynamic young researcher.

In the present grant request Fabio is seeking support to develop his PhD, which he started under my supervision. His study of the genus *Mendoncia* promises to be both challenging and also most interesting, as this Pantropical genus is obviously poorly known in Brazil and the species circumscription needs work. The research will involve the search for new characters and the equivalence of the species concept used in neighbouring Colombia, where a revision has contributed many new names, and in the old world, where the genus has been studied recently. Colombia and Ecuador are apparently the centres of diversity of the genus and are to be focussed during his research.

Lately Fabio has been employed in consultancy and has managed to increase his field experience of Amazonian Flora, with a specific focus in Acanthaceae and *Mendoncia*. He has been in the field for 4 months, and has been diligent in taking advantage of this opportunity to collect specimens, make images and ancillary samples of his study subject.

Fabio's research is advancing, however he will need to consult several Brazilian (SP, SPF, RB, R) and international herbaria in Colombia and Ecuador (ANDES, BOG, CAUP, COAH, COL, FMB, HPUJ, ICA, JBB, UDBC, ECUAMZ, LOJA, HUTPL and CHEP). If he was to obtain this grant, the funds would be put towards completing these trips and taking advantage of being in Colombia and Ecuador to visit some field localities too.

I wholeheartedly support Fabio in this and all other endeavours. He is a researcher born and bred in the Amazon, and it is very important to support the people who will study this flora in the future.



Daniela Zappi

20 February 2020