

26 Feb 2020

To the IAPT Research Grants (Grant Round 2020)

I write to confirm that I am aware of the Research Project, entitled “Investigation for reinstatement of *Phoebe reticulata* Mez (Lauraceae), a neglected species from the Brazilian Atlantic Forest” to be submitted to IAPT by Dr. Marcelo Leandro Brotto, as his project proposal to the 2020 round of IAPT research grants program in plant systematics. I have known Marcelo for at least 12 years, since he was a M.Sc. student, working with the species of *Ocotea* of the Dense Ombrophylous Forest in Paraná state, Brazil. Although we did not keep contact for many years, in 2016 I had the opportunity to meet Marcelo in Curitiba, Paraná. On this occasion, Marcelo has guided me and Dr. Jens G. Rohwer (Universität Hamburg) in a field trip to several areas of Paraná state, in order to collect specimens of Lauraceae for taxonomic and phylogenetic studies. Thanks to Marcelo, this expedition was highly successful, since we were able to collect 69 specimens of 36 species of Lauraceae (out of 50 that are registered for the state) from different populations, during six days of field work. At this opportunity we have started discussing about several taxonomic problems involving species identification of the taxa surveyed by Marcelo in his PhD thesis project, at that time in course. In 2018 I was a member of Marcelo’s thesis board when, again, I could testify his zealous and excellent work on the Lauraceae of the Parque Estadual das Lauráceas. As part of his thesis, questions and doubts about the status of several Lauraceae species have arisen, including *Phoebe reticulata* Mez \equiv *Cinnamomum reticulifolium* Kosterm., which is currently being proposed by Marcelo to be investigated properly. Marcelo’s proposal is very important because the Lauraceae, whilst one of the main families in terms of species diversity in the various biomes of Brazil, are still very little known regarding taxon identity. *Glaziou* 18432, the type specimen of *P. reticulata*, is a good example of a taxon that was described based on fruiting material and has remained doubtful since no flowering specimen has been collected so far. It was collected in the region of Nova Friburgo, Rio de Janeiro, in January-February 1891 (B[†] [F neg. 3601], C10013536, K000602096, P00128575). Fruiting specimens of many Lauraceae can often be identified only by matching them with flowering ones from the same area. Therefore, Marcelo’s plan of locating and collecting complete material of the species in its type locality is fundamental for unveiling its taxonomic status.

Besides the reasons aforementioned, it is worthy to add that most of the Lauraceae taxa collected by Glaziou in the region of Nova Friburgo (at least a dozen species) have never been collected again by other researchers. A plausible explanation for that is because it is a mountain region of difficult access and the trees are usually tall. To face these challenges, Marcelo has the necessary qualifications and skills for accomplishing the intended enterprise: he is a diligent and experienced student of the Lauraceae, a mountaineer, and he climbs trees, thus fulfilling the essential requirements.

Please contact me if there are any other information I can provide regarding this candidate, at pedro.r.moraes@unesp.br

Sincerely,



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