BRYOPHYTES of Mascarene Islands

September 7th to 20th 2008

First Taxonomic workshop and field meeting

[Logos]
1. Summary

This is the first international meeting on tropical bryology in La Réunion which will be hosted at the University of La Réunion and organized for the Tropical Bryology Group (TBG), from September 7th to 20th 2008.

The meeting/workshop will focus on working with the liverwort identification keys of the Mascarene Islands, in production by Drs. Jacques Bardat (Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle) and Claudine Ah-Peng (University of La Réunion / University of Cape Town), making corrections and comments on them by observing fresh specimens.

Experts on particular taxonomic groups will provide training / discussion in their area of particular expertise during the meeting and some introductory training in bryology will be provided for local botany students, botanists, forest officers, conservation planners.

In addition, collecting trips will be made to various under-recorded areas of the island to increase knowledge of the known flora and provided material to work with in workshop sessions.
2. Project

1. Background

La Réunion is characterized by the presence of native ecosystems in a good state of conservation for the Western Indian Ocean area and, as an oceanic island, possesses an original biological patrimony with a high rate of endemism. On the 835 native angiosperms, 28% is strict endemics of Reunion (Conservatoire Botanique de Mascarin, Coord. V. Boulet). The island is also part of a hot spot of biodiversity with Madagascar (Myers et al. 2000). The necessity to conserve the native habitats and its relative biological resources implies a good fundamental knowledge on what is it constituted (functional and specific diversity), with the aim of slowing down the loss of biodiversity. Actually, numerous biological groups remain understudied, notably small organisms, as bryophytes. Bryophytes represent a major part of the forest ecosystems in tropical areas, from microhabitats to landscapes' scale. They play also an important role in nutrient cycling and water storage in ecosystems.

There are currently very few floristic works on tropical African bryophytes though the bryophyte flora of the Mascarenes Islands has been comparatively well documented with collections. Among the last decades, the main works on the bryophyte flora for La Réunion have been furnished by Tamás Pócs (1994, 1995 and 1996) and Theo Arts (2005), including collections respectively for liverworts and mosses.

Between 2004 and 2007, an ecological work on the diversity and distribution of bryophytes on lava flows was carried out by Claudine Ah-Peng that increases the knowledge on the ecology of these pioneer species. Among other studies, the main works on the bryophyte flora for La Réunion have been furnished by Tamás Pócs (1994, 1995 and 1996) and Theo Arts (2005), including collections respectively for liverworts and mosses.

Since 2003, Jacques Bardat undertook the elaboration of the Flora of Liverworts of the Mascarene islands with Claudine Ah-Peng. The Liverwort and Hornwort Flora of the Mascarene islands will be an illustrated book, including identification keys, species description, ecology and distribution of liverworts and hornworts for the islands, with a focus on La Réunion island which has been more investigated by the authors. Once completed, this text book will be used to encourage bryology among local students and assist with conservation planning.

2. Aims of the TBG workshop in La Réunion

To complete the flora, collaboration is required with foreign bryologists with specialist knowledge of particular bryophyte groups. During these 14 days in La Réunion, experts will collaborate on this liverwort and hornwort flora, (1) testing the keys by working on fresh specimens, (2) by adding their comments, (3) teaching on their family or genera of expertise concerning the identification, systematics and biogeography and (4) doing collections of bryophytes on under collected areas on the island. This meeting will be also the opportunity to initiate the Moss Flora of the island. Some collaboration with identification keys for the flora will be made pre-field trip on a basis of species lists. The presence of experts of Tropical Bryology in the island will be the opportunity to train some botanist's amateurs or professionals to the knowledge of bryophytes.
3. Introduction to Bryology

A group of 10 persons, local botanists, students will follow the seminars on the Tropical Bryology Group in La Réunion and benefit of the presence of these international experts in tropical bryology. Three hours of introduction of bryophytes, systematic and ecology, will be given by Jacques Bardat and Claudine Ah-Peng, the aspect of how identify these plants will be accentuated.

After these three hours of presentation, the attendees of this workshop for beginners will join the main workshop and will be placed between the bryologists in the laboratory room. They will follow the seminars on the most diversified and main tropical families of bryophytes in La Réunion.

They will be offered the opportunity to join the specialists on the field and recognize bryophyte families during field work. Consequently, they will manage to progress rapidly with the observations of bryophytes, the identifications techniques and the curation of bryophytes specimens, and will be able to undertake bryophytes collections and identifications by their own.

Please contact Claudine Ah-Peng to confirm your presence before the July 15th 2008 claudine.ahpeng@gmail.com
5. Organizers

Miss Claudine Ah-Peng is a reunionnese bryologist. She defended her PhD in Tropical Bryology in December 2007 at the University of La Reunion. She is now detached for six months at the University of Cape Town continuing working on the bryoflora of the Indian Ocean islands.

Mr. Jacques Bardat is a forestrian ecologist, specialized in bryology, at the Department of systematic at the National Muséum of natural History, Paris. He is familiar with temperate and boreal bryophytes and is focusing his research activities in tropical bryology. His work concerns taxonomy, functioning of forestrian ecosystems and phytosociology of bryophytes and developing his skills on an elaboration of a bryophyte flora.

Miss Joanna Wilbraham is working at the Natural History Museum. She is the correspondent for the Tropical Bryology Group. She focused her research activities on the Orthotrichaceae, especially the genera Macromitrium and Schlothoemia.

Mr. Dominique Strasberg has a recognized expertise on biodiversity in islands, especially the Mascarene archipelago. Over the last 15 years he focused his research work on ecology of tropical rain forest (colonisation and diversity of tropical tree communities and mechanisms of dispersion), studied the role of perturbations and biological invasions in plant community dynamics. Since 2006, he has been co directed with Pr. H. Bruggemann a major research program on the South-West Indian Ocean Biodiversity Hotspot (ANR BIOTAS), which constitutes a biota-level study of diversification on land and sea, included 8 national and international research teams.

6. Participants

BBS Tropical Bryology Group

Around fifteen persons will attend this workshop; they will be largely from the Tropical Bryology Group (British Bryological Society, UK).

The BBS Tropical Bryology Group (TBG) was set up in 1989, as a specialist group of the British Bryological Society. The principal aims of the TBG are to encourage and promote research on tropical bryophytes. A need to focus research expertise on tropical bryophytes was recognised in light of the increased threat to bryophytes caused by continuing damage to the tropical environment.

The TBG has an international membership and currently includes approximately 60 members, including bryologists from tropical countries. The TBG, specifically core members of the group, have contributed to: increasing the knowledge of certain under-known tropical areas; to the scientific understanding of certain taxonomic groups; and to collecting efforts and herbarium activities in certain countries. They have produced over 50 publications resulting directly from their TBG involvement.

TBG activities have concentrated on African bryology, where the group has been able to make a significant and continuing impact. Current projects include a generic bryophyte flora of Africa and a bryophyte flora of Uganda. The TBG newsletter is produced annually and provides a forum for tropical bryology news, publications and articles by members etc.

For logistic reasons no more than 18 places are available for this first workshop.
### List of attendees (Title, name, email, institute)

1. Dr. Jacques BARDAT  
   bardat@mnhn.fr  
   Muséum National d’Histoire Naturelle, France

2. Dr. Min CHUAH-PETIOT  
   mpetiot50@gmail.com  
   University of Nairobi, Kenya

3. Dr. Len ELLIS  
   l.ellis@nhm.ac.uk  
   Natural History Museum, England

4. Pr. Terry HEDDERSON  
   thedders@egs.uct.ac.za  
   University of Cape Town, South Africa

5. Pr. Tamás PÓCS  
   colura@chello.hu  
   Eszterhazy Teachers’ College, Hungary

6. Mr. Roger LALA  
   Missouri Botanical Garden, Madagascar

7. Pr. David LONG  
   d.long@rbge.org.uk  
   Royal Botanic Gardens, Scotland

8. Mr. Howard MATCHAM  
   hwlgmatch@yahoo.co.uk  
   Independant, England

9. Mr. Ron PORLEY  
   ron.porley@naturalengland.org  
   Independant, England

10. Pr. Lars SÖDERSTROM  
    lars.soderstrom@bio.ntu.no  
    NTNU, Norway

11. Pr. Benito TAN  
    Benito_TAN@nparks.gov.sg  
    Herbarium of Singapore Botanic Gardens, Singapour

12. Miss Joanna WILBRAHAM  
    j.wilbraham@nhm.ac.uk  
    Natural History Museum, England

13. Dr. Ida BRUGGEMAN-NANNENGA  
    brugg.nann@xs4all.nl  
    Independant, Netherlands

14. Mr. Itambo MALOMBE  
    malombe2002@yahoo.com  
    East African Herbarium, Kenya

15. Dr. Jeff DUCKETT  
    j.g.duckett@gmail.ac.uk  
    QMCL, University of London, England

16. Dr. Silvia PRESSEL  
    s.pressel@gmail.ac.uk  
    QMCL, University of London, England

17. Dr. Ana SENECA

18. Dr. Liz KUNGU  
    e.kungu@rbge.org.uk  
    Royal Botanic Gardens, Scotland

*In bold people who have already confirmed their coming.*
7. Budget

Funding

This project is eligible for funding via the Université de La Réunion. The flight expenses of six attendees to La Réunion will be completely covered by the workshop, the candidature of independent expert tropical bryologists, key note intervenants and students in the African geographical area will be supported for this allocation.

The participation fee for this workshop is 200 euros per person including accommodation, food and field work.

For the Introduction to Bryology group:

Forfait 12 days including lunch: euros
Forfait 7 days including lunch: euros
Students or unemployed people (½ price): euros

As an international meeting on the biodiversity of La Réunion, the organization committee will greatly appreciate to associate the National Park and Regional council to this event.

References


*Pleurozia gigantea* (F. Weber) Lindb.
Registration form

Name: ____________________________

Firstname: ____________________________

Female ☐  Male ☐

Institute: ____________________________

Address: ____________________________________________

Phone: ____________________________

Fax: ____________________________

Email: ____________________________

Fundings:  personal ☐  Institute ☐

Fees: 200 Euros

Bank transfer ☐  Cash ☐

Are you vegetarian?  Y  N

Have you already been in Reunion?  Y  N

What do you expect of this TBG workshop in Reunion?

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Date/ hour / Number of your flights: ____________________________

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Contacts

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Leucoloma sp. and Herbertus sp.