

## Proceedings of the XIX<sup>th</sup> AETFAT Congress (Madagascar 2010)

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Editor in Chief

The Publishers of this journal, the *Royal Botanical Society of Belgium* and the *National Botanic Garden of Belgium* have a long-standing focus on Afrotropical botany. The *Garden's* herbarium acquired central African plant collections ever since the foundation of the Congo Free State in 1885. The *Society* published many results of Belgian research in central Africa (e.g. Duvigneaud 1957, Schmitz 1963, Malaisse 1984, Leteinturier et al. 2001).

Belgian botanists also played a major role in the foundation of AETFAT (“Association pour l’Etude Taxonomique de la Flore d’Afrique Tropicale”) and the first Congress of the Association took place in Brussels in 1951 (Anonymous 1952). Despite being a very loose association, with no proper council and no payment for membership, AETFAT grew into a successful forum for Africa botanists. Meetings are kept every three years and – in contrast to the T of Taxonomy in the Association’s name – encompass all aspects of African field botany. The proceedings of these congresses, many published as books of about one thousand pages each, comprise numerous key papers for the field and faithfully reflect the development of studies of the African flora and vegetation. Their reading should therefore be a must for every novice in African botany. There is no doubt that one of the most remarkable results of the Association is the establishment of a widely adopted phytochorological system discussed at many AETFAT Congresses (White 1993).

The *National Botanic Garden of Belgium* organized the AETFAT Congress in 2000 and published its Proceedings (Robbrecht et al. 2001). We are glad that ten years later we played again a role in organizing the Congress held in Antananarivo by publishing the Abstract book (Jeannoda et al. 2010). Our editorial team now prepares the Proceedings of the Madagascar Congress. These peer-reviewed Proceedings will be published as a volume of the book series *Scripta Botanica Belgica*, but the best papers are prepublished in this journal. Four were already included in the previous issue (see *Plant Ecology and Evolution*, volume 144, issue 2: pages 121–137 and 177–225) and five more papers are published in the present issue: Wieringa & Sosef testing the effectiveness of a new method for assessing the conservation value of protected areas (pages 242–248); Siebert on plant species rich-

ness in South African grasslands (pages 249–254); Palla et al. defining the forest typology in the Gabonese Lopé National Park (pages 255–266); Muasya et al. investigating patterns of species richness of the Cyperaceae of Madagascar (pages 357–362); and Rakatoarivelo et al. describing an endemic orchid from the Comoros (pages 363–366).

A total of 78 submissions were received for the AETFAT Proceedings. Needless to say that we needed to reinforce the team of editors in order to handle successfully the review process of all manuscripts, as well as the task of publishing the accepted papers. I sincerely thank Rainer Bussmann, Laurent Gautier, Thomas Haevermans, Vololoniaina Jeannoda, Sigrid Liede-Schumann, Pete Lowry, Sylvain Razafimandimbison, Brice Sinsin, Bonaventure Sonké, Marc Sosef and Mats Thulin for willingly accepting to act as guest editors.

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