Evolution and systematics of lichens in the Neotropics

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The Neotropical region is widely recognized as an extraordinary center of diversity and endemism of lichen-forming fungi, as well as for many other organisms. Recent studies in the area using multilocus phylogenetics, biogeographic history and integrative species delimitation methods revealed substantial undescribed diversity, endemism, cryptic speciation and high degree of incongruence between classical morphology-based taxonomy and molecular studies. However, the evolutionary history and systematics of these fungi remain still underexplored, especially in comparison to temperate regions. This symposium aims to bring together researchers working on integrative systematics that combine molecular phylogenetics, taxonomy, chemistry, and biogeography of Neotropical lichens and related organisms. We aim to promote cutting-edge research in Neotropical lichen systematics including studies on molecular phylogenies, endemism, photobiont diversity, methodological innovations, and their implications for conservation. Additionally, this symposium seeks a scientific platform for discussing collaborative strategies to improve molecular data accessibility in Neotropical countries, support taxonomic training, and encourage international collaborations to accelerate the discovery, documentation and conservation of tropical lichen diversity.