

THE SCIENCE AMONG US (2)

The multidisciplinary character of *Interciencia* makes room within its pages for papers dealing with many diverse topics such as the natural history of plants of epiphytic habit and the corporative strategies of entities in the banking sector. The large variety of themes that are addressed leave, nevertheless, an important space for those which are perhaps the highest priorities of mankind: food and the preservation of the planet.

The current issue includes, as it is customary, the presentation of studies related to ecology and the environment. One of them focuses on the decision concerning which are the ecological diversity indices of the highest sensitivity and relevance in order to prioritize and delimit zones to be decreed as new protected natural areas. The subject is approached from an eco-systemic point of view at the level of the different regions that make up a given area. In this manner, the establishment of such protected areas could be made using the most appropriate tools available to this end. In another work aspects are presented of the natural history of a kind of plants with a very abundant presence in the heterogeneous vegetal landscape of tropical forests, such as the strangler hemiepiphytic plants. It emphasizes the existing associations among species and the phenotypic plasticity that allows the plant to have access to the nutrients that it requires.

Also in this issue there are several contributions referring to agriculture and food. On the one hand, results from the phenotypic and productivity characterization of some varieties and selections of guava fruits, an important crop in numerous places of Latin America and, particularly, of Mexico, which allow local producers to better select the plants to cultivate for industrial purposes. On the other hand, a very different approach aims to establish the parameters that are determinant of massive consumption grain yield by means of mathematical simulations of the culture under changing weather conditions in semi-arid temperate areas of Mexico where dry bean grows without irrigation. Crop simulation allows producers to plan adequately in view of prevailing changing environmental conditions.

Agroecology constitutes a relatively novel discipline that, based upon ecological principles, pursues the development of sustainable and environment friendly agricultural systems. One of the papers in this issue presents its theoretical grounds, comprised within the so-called complex thought, which focus the agricultural reality from a multi-factorial and humanistic perspective that integrates it to society and differentiates it from the traditional agronomy. Another examines the reaction of the students of an agronomy class that are exposed to the principles and practices of agroecology. Closely related to this discipline is the study of popular knowledge, the object of ethnobotany and whose quantitative indices are evaluated and compared in a rural settlement in Brazil.

However, while agriculture has been the major provider of foodstuff for man, aquaculture is regarded as the technology available to mankind to insure food sufficiency in the future, in addition to being the source of innumerable products of industrial interest. Its development requires of detailed studies that will permit to increase the nutritive value of the primary sources, among which microalgae are of great importance. A research group that has been dedicated for decades to the improvement of marine edible species cultivation shows the usefulness of mutation-selection techniques to obtain mutant strains of microalgae genetically improved to reach a higher lipid content.

The analysis of the corporative strategies of enterprises in the banking sector represents a certain twist from the standard contents of *Interciencia*, and it belongs to the studies of social and economic interest that are found more and more frequently in our pages. By means of the use of statistical techniques groupings are identified according to the operative strategies that are implemented, as well as the modifications that the latter go through in unstable environments. The study of the Venezuelan case could facilitate a better management of the local banking sector.

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Editor