

## A tribute to André Aptroot, honoring his longstanding career in the taxonomy of lichenized and other fungi



André Aptroot during an excursion to the Parque Estadual Acarai in Santa Catarina, Brazil, in 2015. Photo: Robert Lücking.

We dedicate this special issue of *Plant and Fungal Systematics* to Dr. André Aptroot on the occasion of his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday. The 18 papers collected in this volume represent the broad scientific interests of André, with a particular focus on the taxonomy of lichenized fungi, biodiversity inventories, and lichen conservation. Born on April 7, 1961, André soon became interested in biology, collecting his first plant specimen when he was only 11 years old. At the age of 18, he published his first scientific paper, devoted to ground beetles. His interests gradually shifted, through plants, including mosses, he made his way to lichens, resulting in his first lichenological publication in 1982, just one year after beginning his studies in biology



André Aptroot during the international *Graphidaceae* workshop in Puerto Rico in 2014, doing what he does best: looking for rare and overlooked lichens where nobody else would look. Photo: Robert Lücking.

at the University of Utrecht. In 1988, André obtained his Master's degree, and in 1993, his PhD, both under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Rob Gradstein. At that time, he had already published more than 80(!) scientific works, including a monograph of *Pyxinaceae* (now *Caliciaceae*) in the Guianas based on his Master's studies and a revision of selected pyrenocarpous lichens and fungi from his PhD. André held a position at the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research before he moved to the renowned Centraalbureau voor Schimmelcultures (now Westerdijk Fungal Biodiversity Institute), where he worked until 2006. He then started his Adviesbureau voor Bryologie en Lichenologie, conducting botanical surveys and extending his international network during many collecting trips. Between 2019 and 2023, he was a visiting professor at the Universidade Federal do Mato Grosso do Sul in Campo Grande, Brazil. Today, André is considered one of the most prolific lichenologists and mycologists of all times, having published more than 1,230 scientific works and describing over 1,330 new taxa. With this special issue, we celebrate his substantial contributions to lichenology and mycology, and look forward to many more years of his scientific discoveries and collaborations. We also express our sincere gratitude to all authors who contributed to this special issue.

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