The year 2018 was declared as the “Year of the Aroids” at the Missouri Botanical Garden. As part of the celebratory activities included during the year, one special aroid issue was set to be produced for each of the journals published by the Garden, the *Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden* (this issue) and *Novon* 27(1).

The history of aroid research at the Missouri Botanical Garden has been long and productive. Dr. Thomas B. Croat, one of the Araceae (aroid) family specialists at the Garden, recently reached two milestone anniversaries, both in his career and in life. Dr. Croat is currently the longest-working staff member of the Science and Conservation Division, with 51 years as Garden staff. And, in 2018, he also celebrated his 80th birthday. Dr. Croat is considered one of the few “megacollectors” of plants, having collected more than 107,000 plant specimens, in more than 6000 different localities throughout the world. During his extensive career, he has named more than 1400 new aroid species, discovering more new taxa than any other aroid researcher alive. In his honor, one aroid genus (*Croatiella* E. G. Gonç.) and seven other Araceae species have been named. Dr. Croat has published extensively as well, with almost 200 scientific and popular articles dealing with several aspects of the knowledge of the family Araceae. Thus, it is fitting that this special aroid issue of the *Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden* brings together different scientific viewpoints in the family. From biogeography to taxonomy, to morphology, pollination biology, and conservation, there is still a lot to discover in this immensely diverse group of plants.

The first article in this issue (Croat, 2019) gives us an overview of the family Araceae, emphasizing its high species diversity and increasing rates of new species discovery as well as suggesting future directions for research in the group. Croat et al. (2019) exemplify these points clearly in their revision of *Anthurium* Schott sect. *Polyneurium* Engl. for the Lita–San Lorenzo region in Ecuador. In their article, 32 species are fully described, including 13 new to science, all of them coming from a small area that has proven to be a center of diversity for Araceae. A regional account of the family Araceae for the state of Veracruz, Mexico, is presented by Krömer et al. (2019), including geographic distributions and conservation assessments for all 54 taxa occurring in the region. Unfortunately, they reveal that ca. 80% of aroid taxa from Veracruz belong to a threatened IUCN category, mainly because of the continued loss and fragmentation of their natural habitats. Díaz Jiménez et al. (2019) present in this issue a seminal revision of pollination biology in aroids with bisexual flowers, the most species-rich group of aroids, but for which pollination mechanisms are still poorly understood.

1 The efforts of the editorial team of the *Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden*, Allison M. Brock, Peter Hoch (current Editor-in-Chief), Amanda Koehler, Lisa J. Pepper, and Libing Zhang (past Editor-in-Chief), to make this special aroid issue a reality are significantly appreciated. The work of more than a dozen reviewers who made great comments and suggestions to improve the quality of the submitted manuscripts is also greatly valued.

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