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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR LICHENOLOGY

The **International Association for Lichenology (IAL)** promotes the study and conservation of lichens. It organizes symposia, field trips, and distributes a biannual newsletter. The activity of IAL can be followed on several social media platforms: IAL YouTube channel, IAL Facebook page, IAL X account. People wishing to renew their membership or become members of IAL are requested to pay their membership fee (one payment of 30 EUR for 2021-2026) using PayPal or by bank transfer. All details available at http://www.ial-lichenology.org/.

The **International Lichenological Newsletter** is the official publication of IAL. It is issued twice a year (July and December) in English. Previously published newsletters are available at https://ial-lichenology.org/newsletters/. The *Newsletter* is divided into four main sections: 1) **Association news**: official information concerning the Association, such as minutes of Council meetings, proposals of Constitutional changes, new members, changes of addresses, etc. 2) **News**: information about lichenologists, institutional projects, herbaria, requests of collaboration, announcements of meetings, book reviews, etc. 3) **Reports**: reports of past activities, short lectures, obituaries, short historical novelties, etc. 4) **Reviews**: presentation of recent progress and other topics of interest in lichenology with optional discussion.

Any information intended for publication should reach the Editor on or before June 10 and November 10 for inclusion in the July and December issues, respectively.

IAL affairs are directed by an Executive Council elected during the last General Meeting. Council members elected at the virtual IAL9 Symposium (Bonito, Brazil, 2021) are listed below, and will serve until 2026.

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ASSOCIATION NEWS

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear members of the IAL and friends,

With the IAL10 Welcome Reception less than two weeks away, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all current members of the IAL Council, the Auditors, and the members of the numerous IAL committees for their generous service to the IAL community. One of the greatest rewards of serving on the IAL Council is the opportunity to build lasting friendships with fellow lichenologists from around the world.

This council has greatly benefited from the widespread availability of videoconferencing platforms that became commonplace during the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout this unusually long five-year term, we met online. This was far more efficient, and more fun, than using only emails. Together, we developed a completely new website for IAL, greatly enhanced the visibility of lichenology at IMC12, expanded IAL membership to 450 members, made significant progress towards officially registering the IAL as a non-profit organization, and, under the leadership of Lucia Muggia (President of IAL10, and Secretary of IAL) we contributed to IAL10, which I am certain will be an exceptionally exciting congress.

I am grateful to the Early Career Research Committee for organizing the online IAL Lichen Journal Club. The IAL Nomination Committee worked diligently to generate as many candidates as possible for the next IAL Council. I am thankful to the IAL Awards Nomination Committee, which successfully solicited numerous nominations for the IAL awards presented during IMC12 and for those that will be unveiled during IAL10. The Auditorship Committee went beyond their duty by helping the Council identify suitable banking options for IAL. The Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee was the first voluntary committee established during this council's term and played a key role in implementing changes based on the community survey they organized for IAL.

Most of these activities and successes would not have been possible without the exemplary dynamism of the Communication Committee, led by Silvana Munzi. In addition to serving as member-at-large, Silvana kept the IAL community connected and ensured that the IAL was actively present online through multiple creative initiatives. One of the most demanding tasks for the IAL is to publish the International Lichenological Newsletter (ILN) twice a year. Beata Guzow-Krzemińska has served as Editor of ILN since 2016! This has been an extraordinary commitment that includes coordinating contributions and the challenging task of reminding everyone about editorial deadlines. The ILN is central to the IAL, and Beata did an amazing job. You will find the names of all members on these IAL committees at the end of this ILN issue. Please join me in thanking them.

I encourage everyone to read this issue of the ILN, which contains important information about IAL10, a proposal for a new constitution, and an important series of votes that require your immediate attention. Finally, I would like to remind current members of the IAL that their membership will expire at the end of IAL10 (under the current constitution) or the end of 2026 (under the proposed new constitution). Either way, the best time to renew your membership is during IAL10. This can be done during registration or from Monday to Thursday between 3:30 pm and 4:00 pm at the registration desk. For €30, you will renew your membership through IAL11.

I am looking forward to seeing you in Trieste.

François Lutzoni, Durham, North Carolina

AGENDA OF THE IAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY DURING IAL10

All current IAL members are invited to participate in the IAL General Assembly, which will be held on Thursday, July 30, 2026, at 4:30 PM (see IAL10 program for location).

Agenda:

1. Opening (President)
2. Council's Report (Secretary)
3. Treasurers' Report (including discussion about future membership fees)
4. Auditor's Report
5. IAL Constitution, Proposed Changes – voting result
6. IAL11, Year When it will Occur – voting result
7. The next IAL Council, Auditors, and Nomination Committee – voting results
8. IAL11
9. Any other business

All current IAL members have received emails from the IAL Communication Committee with information and links for three surveys to vote for: (1) a new IAL constitution, (2) the year when IAL11 will occur, and (3) the next IAL Council. More than ever, the IAL Council counts on your commitment to cast your votes. This will take only a few minutes of your time but will have major consequences for the future of the IAL.

Thank you!

IAL Council

THE IAL NEEDS A NEW CONSTITUTION AND YOUR VOTE

The IAL has reached a long-standing impasse due to the fact that it is not officially registered as a non-profit organization. This has imposed severe constraints on the bank (in Germany) that holds the IAL's account. The bank currently refuses to process any transactions because it has concluded that this situation is no longer tenable. As a result, the funds will remain inaccessible until the IAL is officially registered.

Since IMC12, I have been actively exploring options for registering the IAL as a non-profit organization. Based on information obtained from other scientific associations, this can be a very expensive undertaking. Thanks to the efforts of Lucia Muggia (IAL Secretary) and Mauro Tretiach, we have identified a financially viable solution to register the IAL in Italy. However, doing so requires amending the IAL constitution to ensure compliance with Italian law. Lucia and Mauro have been working with an attorney in Italy, who has requested specific changes to the constitution in order to proceed successfully with the registration process.

In consultation with Irwin Brodo, Peter Crittenden, Scott LaGreca, and Mats Wedin (all of whom have been involved in drafting or revising the current IAL constitution, or are familiar with the original intent of the IAL constitution), as well as members of the IAL council, Lucia and I have drafted several versions of a new constitution for the IAL. We recently learned from the Italian attorney, who will register the IAL as a non-profit organization in Italy, that the latest version complies with Italian law. Therefore, we are confident that our application for non-profit status will be successful, and that we can now proceed with a vote by the IAL membership.

The proposed new constitution is provided below. The current version of the constitution can be found online on the IAL website: https://ial-lichenology.org/ial-constitution/. In preparing the revised constitution, our primary goal was to keep changes to the current constitution to a minimum while producing a clear, coherent, and legally compliant constitution.

The IAL council recognizes that this latest version of the constitution is not perfect. No constitution is ever perfect. It is important to remember that the constitution can be amended in the future to address specific issues. Also, we should keep in mind the primary reason for undertaking this revision, which is to resolve the banking crisis currently facing the IAL. Unfortunately, this requires us to move forward as quickly as possible.

Because there are numerous minor changes throughout the constitution, it would be impractical to vote for each amendment individually. Instead, we are asking members to cast a single yes/no vote on the revised constitution as a whole, with the understanding that once the IAL is registered, we can continue amending the constitution as needed.

You will soon receive, or may already have received by the time you read this article, a survey asking you to vote yes or no on the proposed new constitution. Please take a few minutes to cast your vote. The results of the vote will be announced during the general assembly of IAL10 in Trieste. It is important that all members of the IAL vote by Friday, July 17, 2026. Thank you for your participation!

François Lutzoni, President, International Association for Lichenology

PROPOSED NEW IAL CONSTITUTION

In BLACK: Text of the current IAL constitution
In RED: New text.
In BLUE: Old text transferred from one article of the current constitution to another article of the proposed version of the constitution.

Constitution of the IAL *(proposed version: May 17, 2026)*

§ 1. **Name, Address and Duration** – The name of the Association is the International Association for Lichenology, hereby abbreviated and referred to as the IAL. IAL is constituted as a non-profit organization. The registered office of the IAL is c/o Department of Life Sciences, University of Trieste, Via Giorgieri 10, 34127 Trieste, Italy. The duration of the IAL is indefinite. The financial year ends on the 31st (thirty-first) of December of each year.

§ 2. **Goals** – The purpose of the IAL is to promote the understanding of lichens and lichenology world-wide. To achieve this, the IAL shall: a) encourage the study of lichens, b) advocate lichenological interests in the international arena, c) stimulate communication and discussion among those interested in lichens, d) organise symposia, field meetings, conferences, e) make awards, and f) support the conservation of lichens, among other activities. The IAL is affiliated to the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS) and the International Association of Botanical and Mycological Societies (IABMS).

§ 3. **Membership** – Members of the IAL are those whose dues have been paid. Any person, regardless of nationality, religion, and gender, may apply for membership in IAL. Memberships are confirmed after applications are vetted by at least one IAL Council Officer. Any member who is more than two years in arrears in payment may be suspended by the Council. The membership years close on 31st (thirty-first) December of each year; the first membership year ends on 31st (thirty-first) December 2026 (two thousand and twenty-six).

§ 4. **Power to raise Money** – The IAL exists only for non-profit status.
IAL has the power to raise money by dues or other means as approved by the Council, but only for activities within its goals, scientific purposes, awards, and for its administration.

§ 5. **Dues** – Membership dues will be determined, upon advice of the IAL Council, by a vote by the membership via electronic or paper ballot as described in § 12.

§ 6. IAL Organs – The IAL constitutional organs are the General Assembly, the Council (also called IAL Council), the Auditors, and the Nominating Committee. All meetings of the constitutional organs may be conducted in person or electronically via audio and/or videoconference, to the extent permitted by law.

§ 7. General Assembly – All members that are up-to-date with their membership fees have the right to participate in the General Assembly. The General Assembly shall act by a majority vote of those present, notwithstanding the provisions of § 12, 14 and 15. The IAL will hold its General Assembly, convened by the Council, once a year to approve the budget. The assembly may also be convened when it is deemed necessary by the Council or when requested by at least one tenth of the members, in the manner deemed most suitable to bring it to the attention of all members. The IAL shall hold one General Assembly at the IAL Congress, a major international congress covering all aspects of lichenology, to be traditionally organized every fourth year. Announcements of additional meetings or General Assemblies must reach the membership at least six months in advance. Any member can suggest topics for discussion to the Secretary at least two months prior to the General Assembly, so that these will be disseminated to the membership before the General Assembly. Decisions on changes in dues or constitutional rules, as well as election of new Council Officers will be taken by a vote of the membership, as described in § 12, 14 and 15. Additions to the agenda require a two-thirds majority of those present at the General Assembly.

§ 8. Council – The elected Council Officers of the IAL are a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, an Assistant Treasurer, an Editor, and three Council members-at-large. These Council Officers form, together with the President of the Local Organizing Committee of the next IAL Congress, the Council of the IAL. The Council administers the affairs and funds of IAL and shall meet or in other ways communicate, as decided by the President or at the request by Council Officers. The President, or in her/his absence the Vice-President, or any member of Council designated by the President, shall preside at all meetings of IAL and the Council. The President of IAL is given power of representation vis-à-vis third parties and in court and ensures the execution of resolutions passed by the Assembly and the Council. The Secretary shall keep minutes of meetings and shall conduct correspondence as requested by Council. The Treasurer, or in her/his absence the Assistant Treasurer, shall keep an account of all receipts and expenditures and have a statement presented at General assemblies and as requested by Council. The Assistant Treasurer shall assist the Treasurer as requested by the Council. The Editor shall prepare the International Lichenological Newsletter (ILN), whose content and format shall be at her/his discretion subject to review and recommendation of Council. To be valid, decisions of Council—held by a majority vote—require that all Council members have been informed and that at least six of them participated. Council may temporarily fill positions vacated between elections. If at any time fewer than seven elected Officers remain on Council, a new Council must be elected at an extra General Assembly or other voting procedure as outlined in § 12. The Council nominates IAL representatives to the IUBS and the IABMS, when needed. The Council may designate Committees that shall manage topics of particular relevance to the IAL. Such Committees will last until the next Council takes over or until the topic is resolved. The term for Council Officers is four years. The maximum period for any Council Officer is two consecutive terms. Council Officers, with the sole exception of the Editor, cannot serve more than one consecutive term in the same position.

§ 9. Auditor and Vice-Auditor – The Auditor and Vice-Auditor are elected non-Council members. The Auditor, assisted by the Vice-Auditor, will review the financial records of the IAL on behalf of its membership, and present a report at the General Assembly. In her/his absence, the Vice-Auditor

will act as Auditor. The term for Auditor and Vice-Auditor is four years. The maximum period for Auditor and Vice-Auditor is two consecutive terms.

§ 10. Nominating Committee – The Nominating Committee is composed of three elected non-Council members, and they elect a chair among themselves. The Nominating Committee is responsible for organizing the nominations and voting procedures as described in § 12. The term for the Nominating Committee members is four years. The maximum period for the Nominating Committee members is two consecutive terms.

§ 11. Nomination and election of Officers, Auditors and Nominating Committee – The Nominating Committee must publish a call for nominations reaching the membership at least six months prior to the IAL Congress or other voting event. Any member of the IAL may submit nominations or be nominated (including self-nominations), and the call for nominations should encourage diversity and a balanced representation of the membership. The Nomination Committee is to strive for having at least two nominations per post. Nominations, to be valid, need the written consent of the nominees, and need to reach the Nominating Committee at least two months prior to the IAL Congress or other voting event. Nominations from the floor at General Assemblies are allowed only when no nominee for a given post is elected. Elections will be made by majority vote as described in § 12. Voting will take place irrespective of the number of nominees for a post.

§ 12. Voting procedures – Voting procedures will normally take place at or before the General Assembly of the IAL Congress, via electronic or paper ballot. The Nominating Committee will organise the voting procedures for the election of Council Officers, Auditors and the Nomination Committee, in discussion with Council. The Nominating Committee will oversee ballot counting for these elections independently. Other voting procedures are organised by Council. Decisions will be taken by a majority vote; a tie vote shall be resolved by Council and if still necessary by the President. To be valid, a vote requires the participation of at least 10% of the membership. All results from voting procedures including elections will be announced at the General Assembly of the IAL Congress, or via email, as well as in the IAL Newsletter; all changes voted upon come to effect directly after the announcement, including newly elected Council Officers. The current Officers, Auditors and Nominating Committee continue to serve until a voting procedure has taken place.

§ 13. Awards – IAL award recipients are decided on by the Council. The IAL has currently the following six awards:
1) The Mason Hale Award recognizing excellence in research by young lichenologists for outstanding work resulting from doctoral dissertations or similar studies.
2) The Acharius Medal recognizing the life-work of distinguished lichenologists.
3) The Sylvia Sharnoff Education Award for an outstanding web page devoted to lichens.
4) The Dharani Awasthi Award for a prominent young researcher working and living in a low-income country, who has completed a Ph.D. within five years prior to the submission deadline.
5) The Aino Henssen Award for a prominent researcher early in their career, who has completed a Ph.D. within five years prior to the submission deadline.
For the above awards, a call for nominations must reach the membership at least six months in advance of the next main conference, traditionally the IAL Congress and the International Mycological Congress.
6) The Margalith Galun Awards for outstanding student contributions at an IAL Congress (best oral and poster presentations). These awards will be decided by the Council, and presented during the closing ceremony of the IAL Congress.

§ 14. Change of Constitutional Rules – Proposals of changes must be sent to the Secretary at least four months prior to the General Assembly or other voting event, so that they may be disseminated

to the membership before the voting. Changes in these rules may be made only upon approval by not less than two-thirds of the members present at the General Assembly or other voting event, as described in § 12. No rule change shall be allowed which will change the non-profit status of the IAL.

§ 15. Dissolution of the IAL – A motion to dissolve the IAL must be approved by at least two-thirds of all members that are up-to-date with their membership fees. If the IAL is dissolved, any funds remaining after all outstanding liabilities are discharged shall be used for scientific purposes in the field of lichenology as agreed by the last Council.
To be approved…

VOTE NEEDED FOR IAL11 TO OCCUR DURING 2029

As you all know, the IAL congress has traditionally been held once every four years. The same is true for the International Mycological Congress (IMC). These two congresses have been staggered to occur every two years in alternation, while each maintains its four-year cycle. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, both the IAL9 and IMC12 were postponed. IMC13 is scheduled for 2027, after which the IMC will return to its regular four-year cycle. To return to the traditional two-year staggered alternative occurrence, IAL11 would have to be scheduled for 2029. The resulting three-year cycle is transitional and would immediately realign the IAL congress to the usual, pre-pandemic, four-year meeting schedule in alternance with the IMC every two years. The only difference from the pre-pandemic schedule is that future IAL and IMC congresses would be held on odd-numbered years instead of even-numbered years. The proposed schedule would therefore be as follows:

IMC12: 2024 The Netherlands

IAL10: 2026 Italy

IMC13: 2027 South Korea

IAL11: 2029

IMC14: 2031

IAL12: 2033

IMC15: 2035

Please vote yes if you are in favor of IAL11 to occur in 2029. It is important that all members of the IAL vote by Friday, July 17, 2026. Thank you for your participation!

François Lutzoni, President, International Association for Lichenology

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE NOMINATION COMMITTEE

The time has come to elect a new IAL Council for the upcoming term, which will begin at the forthcoming meeting in Italy and continue until the next international meeting.

Information about the nominees will be circulated shortly. Voting will take place online, and all current IAL members will receive an invitation to participate.

The results of the election will be announced during the meeting in Trieste.

We encourage all members to take part in the voting process and help shape the future of the IAL.

Thank you for your participation.

Troy McMullin (tmcmullin@nature.ca),
Manuela Dal Forno (mdalforno@brit.org)
and Ave Suija (ave.suija@ut.ee)

IAL COUNCIL CANDIDATES SHORT BIOS

President (1 candidate): Marcela Cáceres (Brazil)

Marcela Cáceres is a full Professor and researcher at the Federal University of Sergipe (UFS), Brazil, internationally recognized for her contributions to lichenology, biodiversity research, and the study of tropical lichens. She currently serves as Vice President of the International Association for Lichenology (IAL) and is a candidate for its presidency. Marcela has been instrumental in fostering international collaboration, training new generations of scientists, and advancing lichenological research in Latin America. She also served as President of the IAL9 Symposium in Bonito, Mato Grosso do Sul, successfully leading one of the world's major gatherings of lichenologists.

Vice-President (1 candidate): Martin Kukwa (Poland)

Martin Kukwa is professor at the Faculty of Biology and Head of the Department of Plant Taxonomy and Nature Conservation, University of Gdańsk, and also head of the Laboratory of Lichenology and Experimental Mycology at the same university. He is chairperson of the Scientific Council, W. Szafer Institute of Botany, Polish Academy of Sciences, Kraków, Poland, and author and co-author of c. 350 scientific papers, book chapters and a book. His interests include lichen taxonomy, lichen symbiosis, tropical lichens and photobiont diversity.

Secretary (2 candidates for one position):
Annie Evankow (USA)

Dr. Annie Evankow is a Post Doctoral Researcher working with urban lichen evolution at Drexel University, USA. She is the former secretary of the Nordic Lichen Society and is currently co-organizing the upcoming Tuckerman Workshop with the Eastern Lichen Network. Annie organized an online workshop for IAL9, co-created the Lichen Journal Club with Dr. Manuela Dal Forno, and is eager to take a more active role in IAL governance.

Toby Spribille (Canada)

Toby Spribille is Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair at the University of Alberta (Canada). Toby has been working in lichenology for over 30 years. He is one of the founding members of the Canadian Fungal Network (CanFunNet) and has been involved in organizing lichenological workshops and forays in western North America since the 1990s. He has previously served on the IAL Communication Committee as well as the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC).

Treasurer (1 candidate): Lucia Muggia (Italy)

Lucia Muggia is Associate Professor of Systematic Botany at the University of Trieste. She graduated from the University of Trieste and defended her doctoral thesis at Karl Franzens University of Graz. She has been Secretary of the IAL from 2021–2026, and member of the steering committee of the Italian Lichen Society since 2018. Her research on lichens, based on culture-dependent and molecular approaches, has centered on the systematics of the mycobionts *Tephromela*, *Caloplaca*, and a few sterile species and lichenicolous fungi, as well as on that of the *Trebouxia* photobionts. In the past decade, she has also focused on the diversity of fungi cryptically associated with lichen thalli at a global scale.

Assistant Treasurer (1 candidate): Erin Tripp (USA)

Dr. Erin A. Manzitto-Tripp is currently Associate Professor (Ecology & Evolutionary Biology) and Curator of Botany (Museum of Natural History, COLO Herbarium) at University of Colorado–Boulder. Her research spans both lichens and plants (Acanthaceae), with emphasis on biodiversity, systematics, taxonomy, molecular evolution, and conservation. Erin has led collaborative projects involving researchers and institutions across multiple countries. She has extensive experience managing research budgets and multi-institutional grants, including several National Science Foundation awards, totaling > USD $9M. Her professional service includes serving as President and Past-President of the Society of Herbarium Curators, extensive service for the American Society of Plant Taxonomists, and elected Council Member of the Society of Systematic Biologists.

Editor (1 candidate): Antoine Simon (Sweden)

Antoine Simon is a permanent researcher at the Swedish Museum of Natural History (Stockholm). He completed his PhD at the University of Liège (Belgium) in 2020. His current research focuses on the systematics of Peltigerales, particularly lobarioid taxa in tropical regions. He is an active member of the Swedish and Norwegian Lichen Societies. Relevant to the role of Editor of the International Lichenological Newsletter, he has received the Margalith Galun Award twice, reflecting his commitment to clear scientific communication and effective visual presentation

Members at large (6 candidates for 3 positions):

Frank Bungartz (USA)

My research focuses on the biodiversity, evolution, ecology and conservation of lichenized fungi, especially in the Sonoran Desert Region (southwestern USA & northwestern Mexico), Central America (Mexico), and South America (particularly the Galapagos Islands).

My doctoral dissertation at Arizona State University (ASU) focused on saxicolous species in the genus *Buellia* s.l. from the Sonoran Region. I am a contributing author and editor to the *Lichen Flora of the Greater Sonoran Desert Region*, a comprehensive treatment of the lichen species known from this region, published in three volumes, from 2002–2007.

Since July 2017 I have been employed as *Collection Manager of Lichens & Digital Data* at the *ASU Biocollections*. With more than 126,000 specimens, the ASU Lichen Herbarium is the 6th largest collection of lichenized fungi in the US. It is the most comprehensive one for the Sonoran Region.

Prior to being employed by ASU, I worked almost 10 years at the C*harles Darwin Research Station* in the Galapagos Islands. As cryptogamic botanist my research focused on a Biodiversity Inventory of Lichenized Fungi. My research in the archipelago continues. Collaborating with colleagues from around the world, we published numerous revisions with records new to the archipelago and species new to science.

As director of Biodiversity Assessment for the Charles Darwin Foundation, my team established the CDF Datazone, a digital repository of the collections hosted by the research station. We published the first comprehensive biodiversity survey of all species (excluding bacteria) reported from the islands. At Arizona State University, I now manage the *Consortium of Lichen Herbaria*, a collaborative biodiversity data portal focusing on lichenized, lichenicolous, and allied fungi.

For years I have been an active member of both the *IUCN Lichen and Galapagos Specialist Group*. A checklist of globally red-listed lichenized fungi is available through the Consortium of Lichen Herbaria. There, we also recently published the first Checklist of Lichens from Ecuador, including the Galapagos. With colleagues from Mexico we are now preparing a similar checklist for that country. In North America we recently established the *Lichen Conservation Alliance*, working towards a baseline species threatened in Canada, the continental USA, and Mexico.

During my time as a student at ASU, I collaborated with a geologist investigating the endolithic *Bagliettoa rubrocincta*, a species that not only disintegrates its calcite substrate, but at the same time induces the formation of new calcite protecting its surface. Recently, we investigated how macro-photogrammetry may be applied to monitor lichen growth on rock to better understand the time-scale of these organisms that contribute to biodeterioration.

Pradeep K. Divakar (Spain)

Pradeep K. Divakar is Professor at the Department of Pharmacology, Pharmacognosy and Botany, Faculty of Pharmacy, Complutense University of Madrid, Spain. He serves as Associate Editor of Biodiversity and Conservation, BMC Plant Biology, Frontiers in Fungal Biology, Mycokeys and Journal of Fungi. He is a leading authority in lichen biodiversity and evolution and is listed among Stanford University's World's Top 2% Scientists Rankings. His greatest contribution lies in modernizing and redefining the global view of lichen diversity and evolution, integrating classical and molecular approaches, and opening new avenues for understanding the biodiversity and biotechnological potential of these organisms.

Yogesh Joshi (India)

Dr. Yogesh Joshi, currently serving as Associate Professor in the Department of Botany, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, India, is a botanist, lichenologist, and mycologist. His research focuses on the taxonomy, diversity, and ecology of lichens, lichenicolous fungi, and fungal endophytes. He has successfully completed several research projects and has described new genera and numerous new species from India, South Korea, Vietnam, and the Philippines, significantly advancing knowledge of lichenicolous fungi in Asia. In addition, Dr. Joshi is actively involved in academic administration and environmental conservation. As Garden In-charge, he has led the development of the Miyawaki Forest and several biodiversity parks on the University of Rajasthan campus.

Paul Kirika (Kenya)

Paul Muigai Kirika is a Senior Research Scientist and head of Botany Department, East African herbarium, National Museums of Kenya (NMK). He holds a Ph.D in plant and fungal taxonomy from Kenyatta University, and is a member of the editorial board of the flora of Kenya. His special focus is in the study of parmelioid lichens, including their diversity, systematics, phylogeny, biogeography and evolution. Paul has contributed to publications of over 45 scientific articles in international, peer reviewed journals and books. A member of IAL since 2012 and African representative to IAL Council, 2012–2016, he has a keen interest in biodiversity conservation.

Kristiina Mark (Estonia)

Kristiina Mark is an Assistant Professor of Functional Ecology at the Estonian University of Life Sciences, specializing in microbial ecosystems and lichen ecophysiology. Her research integrates photosynthetic, anatomical, chemical, genetic, microbiomic, and symbiont interaction approaches to investigate the function and resilience of lichens. She received her PhD in Botany and Mycology from the University of Tartu in 2016, where her dissertation focused on species diversification and delimitation in lichen-forming fungi of the Parmeliaceae. Since joining the Estonian University of Life Sciences in 2017, she has focused on plant and cryptogam stress physiology and has led the CryptoFunk research group since 2022.

Pamela Rodriguez-Flakus (Poland)

Dr. Pamela Rodriguez-Flakus is a researcher at the W. Szafer Institute of Botany, Polish Academy of Sciences, specializing in the systematics, evolution, genomics, phylogenetics and biodiversity of lichenized fungi. She earned her Ph.D. in Biology from Goethe University, Germany. Throughout her career, she has combined scientific leadership with dedicated service to the lichenological community by competitive national and international research funding, coordinating international collaborations, organizing workshops, mentoring students and researchers, and promoting scientific capacity building in biodiversity-rich yet underrepresented regions, particularly Bolivia. Her work across Latin America and Europe has strengthened international scientific networks and collaboration in lichenological research.

Nomination Committee (5 candidates for 3 positions):

Anna Bérešová (née Guttová) (Slovakia)

Anna Bérešová is a senior researcher at the Plant Science and Biodiversity Centre of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava. Her research focuses on lichen biology, evolutionary ecology, biogeography, symbiosis, biodiversity patterns, and biomonitoring of environmental change, with particular emphasis on Mediterranean and edaphically specialized lichens. She has led numerous national and international research projects and has authored more than 100 scientific publications. Alongside her scientific career, she has extensive leadership experience, having served as Director and subsequently General Director of the Plant Science and Biodiversity Centre for more than eight years, overseeing research strategy, institutional development, and international collaboration.

Theo Llewellyn (UK)

I am a postdoctoral research associate at the Leverhulme Centre for the Holobiont (Imperial College London/Natural History Museum), where I study the evolution of symbiosis in insect-fungal holobionts. My PhD was based at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and Imperial College's Grantham Institute of Climate Change and Environment; it explored the evolution of secondary metabolism in lichens. I organise and lead the IAL Journal club, which meets bimonthly to discuss current research in lichenology. I am also a member of the IAL communications committee. Previously, I have organised events and AGM meetings for the British Lichen Society.

Nicolas Magain (Belgium)

Nicolas Magain is a professor in the department of Biology, Ecology and Evolution at the University of Liège, Belgium. He is also the president of the Botanical Society of Liège. He has attended IAL meetings since 2012, co-hosted two symposia, and co-organized the IAL dinner and the lichen excursion for IMC12 in Maastricht.

Ricardo Miranda (Mexico)

Dr. Ricardo Miranda González is an Associate Researcher at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. His line of research includes ecological interactions of lichens with plants and animals in neotropical dry forests, as well as integrative taxonomy of tropical lichens. He has served as committee member of the Latin American Group of Lichenologists and was part of the organizing committee of its last international meeting in Mexico. In his institution he has served on various boards from topics of inclusion in sciences to seminars organization and science outreach.

Garima Singh (Italy)

I am Garima Singh, currently working as an Assistant Professor at the Dept. of Biology at the University of Padova, Italy. My research focuses on the evolution of fungi, fungal secondary metabolism, and the genomic basis of chemodiversity in lichenized fungi. By integrating genome mining, chemoinformatics, and mass spectrometry, I investigate the relationships between lichen metabolites and their biosynthetic gene clusters, as well as the ecological and climatic factors that shape their distribution. Beyond research, I actively promote public awareness of lichens through annual outreach initiatives such as Science for All. I also organize seminars within the Plant Biology group of the Department of Biology, focusing on the ecology and evolutionary genomics of plants and fungi. In addition, I have organized several symposia on fungal secondary metabolism at international mycological meetings, including IAL.

Auditor (1 candidate):

Natália Koch (Brazil-USA)

Natalia Mossmann Koch is a lichenologist with 18 years of experience studying lichen ecology. She earned her Ph.D. in Ecology from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil) in 2016 and holds masters and undergraduate degrees in Ecology and Biology. She is currently a Research Associate in the Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior at the University of Minnesota. Besides participating in the organizing committee of IAL9, she collaborated with the IAL Communication Committee for one year and is part of the IAL Diversity Committee since 2022.

Vice-auditor (1 candidate): Starri Heiðmarsson (Iceland)

Starri Heiðmarsson is at present director of a small research institute in northern Iceland, Northwest Iceland Nature Research Centre. He defended his thesis on Taxonomy of *Dermatocarpon* in 2000 at Uppsala University, Sweden. After dissertation he worked as a lichenologist for 22 years at the Icelandic Institute of Natural History. Starri has been treasurer of the Nordic Lichen society since 1997 and vice-auditor of IAL 2016-2021 and auditor since 2021.

BID TO HOST THE ELEVENTH INTERNATIONAL LICHENOLOGICAL SYMPOSIUM (IAL11) IN INDIA

The Indian Lichenological Society (ILS) is pleased to propose Lucknow, India, as the venue for the Eleventh International Lichenological Symposium (IAL11) to be held during 2029. Notably, among the ten IAL symposia organized to date, only IAL7 (Bangkok, Thailand) and IAL9 (hosted by Brazil, held virtually) have been associated with tropical countries, while all other meetings have taken place in temperate regions. Given that tropical regions harbor a substantial proportion of the world's biodiversity, there is a compelling case for hosting future IAL symposia in these biologically rich areas.

India is recognized as one of the world's megadiverse countries, supporting more than 3200 lichen species across a remarkable range of ecosystems. The country encompasses two globally important biodiversity hotspots, the Himalaya and the Western Ghats, which harbor approximately 2000 and 1700 lichen species, respectively. Lichenological research in India has a distinguished history dating back to the time of Carl Linnaeus. Although early investigations were primarily undertaken by European lichenologists, modern Indian lichenology was firmly established through the pioneering contributions of Dr. D.D. Awasthi, widely regarded as the 'Father of Indian Lichenology'. His legacy has fostered a vibrant and internationally recognized lichenological community, making India an ideal destination for hosting IAL11.

Over the past two decades, lichenological research in India has expanded considerably from traditional taxonomy to encompass biodiversity assessment, biomonitoring, molecular systematics, ecology, and bioprospecting. Today, more than 200 researchers working across at least 15 active institutions contribute to a vibrant and growing lichenological community, positioning India as a

leading centre for lichen research in Asia. Despite these advances, vast regions of the country remain insufficiently explored, offering exceptional opportunities for new discoveries. Hosting IAL11 in India would provide participants access to some of the world's richest and least-studied lichen habitats, particularly within the Himalaya and Western Ghats, while also offering an opportunity to experience the country's remarkable cultural heritage, iconic UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and extraordinary natural diversity. In turn, Indian lichenologists, especially early-career researchers and students would benefit from direct interaction with world-renowned experts, enabling them to exchange knowledge, establish international collaborations, and gain exposure to cutting-edge techniques and emerging trends in lichen research.

Lucknow, the centre of lichen research in India:

Lucknow has been a major centre of lichenological research since the 1950s. It can be noted that Dr. D.D. Awasthi initiated lichen research from the University of Lucknow. CSIR - National Botanical Research Institute (CSIR-NBRI), which has developed into the national hub of lichenology in India, is located in Lucknow. Its LWG Herbarium houses approximately 125,000 lichen specimens, including collections from the former LWU Herbarium, the personal collections of Dr. D.D. Awasthi, and important exsiccatae from leading European herbaria. This represents one of the most significant lichen sample repositories in Asia. Furthermore, the Lichenology Laboratory at CSIR-NBRI possesses excellent facilities for classical and molecular systematics, supported by a strong team of scientists and research scholars. The combination of world-class collections, modern infrastructure, and experienced scientific leadership makes Lucknow an ideal venue for IAL11 and associated workshops.

Accessibility and facilities:

Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh province, is a historic city renowned for its cultural heritage, architecture, hospitality, and modern infrastructure. It is also a major academic and research centre, hosting more than 15 universities and numerous national research institutions. Lucknow experiences a humid subtropical climate, with hot summers, a monsoon season and mild winters. Summers (April to June) can be extremely hot, with temperatures often exceeding 40°C, while the monsoon (July to September) brings heavy rainfall that may affect travel and outdoor activities. The winter months (November to February) are mild and pleasant, with temperatures ranging from 8°C to 25°C, making it the most comfortable period for travel and events.

Lucknow is served by Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport with direct connections to major Indian cities and several international destinations. Extensive rail, road, and public transport networks ensure convenient travel for participants. Major tourist destinations, including the Taj Mahal in Agra, are easily accessible from Lucknow. The city offers a wide range of accommodation and conference facilities suitable for hosting a large international scientific meeting. With its outstanding lichenological heritage, strong research infrastructure, excellent connectivity, and rich cultural setting, Lucknow provides an ideal venue for the Eleventh International Lichenological Symposium.

Possible venue for the symposium in Lucknow:

- Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Technical University (AKTU) (https://aktu.ac.in/)
- Indira Gandhi Prathishthan (IGP) (http://odopup.in/en/article/indira-gandhi-pratishthan-lucknow)
- Atal Bihari Vajpayee Scientific Convention Centre (ABVSCC) (https://www.kgmu.org/scientific_conv_centre.php)
- Dr. Ram Manohar Lohiya National Law University (https://www.rmlnlu.ac.in/en/page/academic-and-other-infrastructure; https://tinyurl.com/BhimraoAuditorium)
- Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU) (https://www.bbau.ac.in/Auditorium.aspx)
- Hotel Taj Mahal (https://www.tajhotels.com/en-in/meetings)

- Hotel Clarks Avadh (https://www.hotelclarks.com/avadh-lucknow/)
- Hotel The Centrum, Sushant Golf City (https://thecentrum.in/meetings-events/)

Possible sites for pre and post conference field trips:

- **Western Himalaya** - Himachal Pradesh (Kullu and Manali regions, Spiti Valley, Shimla, Kufri forests), Uttarakhand (Valley of Flowers National Park, Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, Auli, Joshimath regions), Himachal-Uttarakhand border regions (Kinnaur, Garhwal Himalaya, Dehradun, Mussoorie, Nainital regions).
- **Eastern Himalaya** - Sikkim (Lachen, Lachung, Yumthang Valley, Pelling, Khecheopalri Lake, Gangtok, Tsomgo Lake), Arunachal Pradesh (Tawang, Bomdila, Ziro Valley, Namdapha National Park), West Bengal (Darjeeling hills, Kalimpong forests).
- **Western Ghats** - Maharashtra (Mahabaleshwar), Karnataka (Coorg, Agumbe), Kerala (Wayanad, Silent Valley National Park, Munnar), Goa (Mollem), Tamil Nadu (Nilgiri Hills).
- **Central India** - Madhya Pradesh (Pachmarhi Plateau), Chhattisgarh (Achanakmar Wildlife Sanctuary).

Proposed workshops:

India has rich diversity of lirellate and pyrenocarpous lichens. Therefore, it would be ideal to organize the following workshops,

1. Taxonomy of lirellate and pyrenocarpous lichens

2. Genomics and molecular systematics

3. Metabolomics and transcriptomics

4. Conservation and red-listing

Proposed organizing team:

- **Convener** – Dr. D.K. Upreti, President, ILS; Emeritus Scientist, CSIR-NBRI, Lucknow.
- **Co-convener** – Dr. Pradeep K. Divakar; Professor, Complutense University of Madrid, Spain.
- **Organizing Secretary** – Dr. Sanjeeva Nayaka, Executive Council Member, ILS; Scientist, CSIR-NBRI, Lucknow.
- **Co-Organizing Secretary** – Dr. Gaurav Kumar Mishra, Secretary, ILS; Scientist, CSIR-NBRI, Lucknow.

Other Members

- Dr. Yogesh Joshi, Associate Professor, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur
- Dr. Rajesh Bajpai, Associate Professor, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong.
- Dr. Jayashree Rout, Professor, Assam University, Silchar
- Dr. Amritesh Chandra Shukla, Professor, University of Lucknow, Lucknow
- Dr. Farishta Yasmin, Professor, Nowgong College, Nagaon
- Dr. Yash Pal Sharma, Professor, University of Jammu, Jammu
- Dr. P. Ponmurugan, Associate Professor, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore

Proposed collaborator:

As the principal members of the proposed organizing committee (Dr. D.K. Upreti, Dr. S. Nayaka, and Dr. G.K. Mishra) are affiliated with CSIR-NBRI, it would be highly appropriate to include CSIR-NBRI as a collaborating institution in the organization of IAL11. Their active involvement in the planning and execution of the symposium, combined with CSIR-NBRI's longstanding leadership in lichenological research, extensive herbarium resources, and state-of-the-art research infrastructure, would significantly contribute to the successful conduct of the event.

Sanjeeva Nayaka, P.K. Divakar, D.K. Upreti, G.K. Mishra

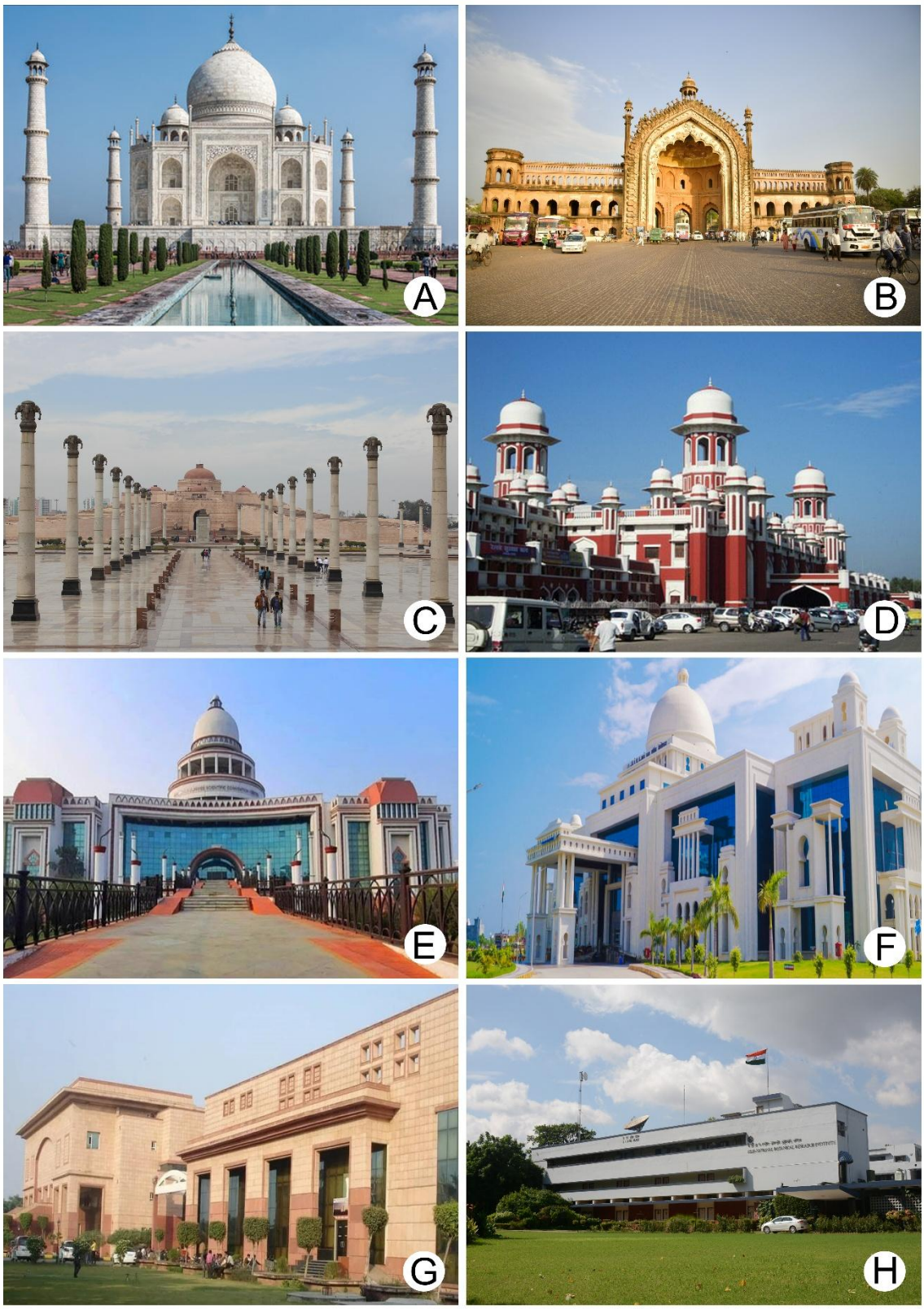

Figure 1. Pictures of important monuments, proposed venues and relevant historical buildings in and around Lucknow. **A.** Taj Mahal, a popular monument in Agra, **B.** Rumi Darwaza, historical gate in Lucknow, **C.** Ambedkar Park, a recreational park in Lucknow, **D.** Northern Railway station, Lucknow, Indo-Saracenic architectural masterpiece constructed during British era in 1923, **E – G.** Few proposed venues for the IAL11 symposium, **E.** Atal Bihari Vajpayee Scientific Convention Centre, King George Medical University, **F.** Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Technical University, **G.** Indira Gandhi Prathishthan, and **H.** CSIR – National Botanical Research Institute, proposed collaborator (Disclaimer: All photographs and images in this article have been sourced from publicly available internet resources and are used for academic purposes only).

NEWS

NEWS FROM ROGER ROSENTRETER AND ANN DEBOLT

Roger Rosentreter and Ann DeBolt participated in three different Global monitoring protocols, referred to as CrustNet biocrust sampling nodes. One was in the sandy Florida scrub habitat; the second was in South-central Idaho with mixed calcareous shrubland, including *Atriplex confertifolia, Artemisia tridentata ssp. wyomingensis*, and *Artemisia arbuscula* habitat. The third was in the southwest Idaho shrublands with *Artemisia tridentata ssp. tridentata* and *Agropyron* habitat. All three had very discreetly different biocrust compositions.

CrustNet is a globally distributed sampling network for biological soil crust (biocrust) ecology. This project implements a standard set of surveys and experiments in diverse biocrust habitats. You can view the map of current sites at this link https://crustnet.org/sites.html. These surveys and experiments were selected and collaboratively designed by biocrust scientists. We would encourage more lichenologists and ecologists to participate.

The network connects scientists worldwide to install CrustNet nodes on the ground. The project takes a tiered approach, with basic, low-cost surveys forming the foundation of the project (Tier 1), followed by add-on experiments with increasing levels of commitment and investment for Tiers 2 and 3. Collaborators familiar with the biocrust and plant species at each node are invaluable to the work. Support for species identification is also available through the network of biocrust scientists and crowd-sourcing tools like iNaturalist.

Through this work, the CrustNet team hopes to inspire scientific and social engagement with biocrust ecology to answer scientific questions and stimulate many more, to produce usable tools for future biocrust work, including a trait database, and to grow & strengthen the international biocrust network.

https://crustnet.org/

Explore CrustNet observations on iNaturalist.

Roger Rosentreter

IUCN LICHEN SPECIALIST GROUP - WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The IUCN is the world's largest volunteer network, bringing together specialists interested in promoting the conservation of species around the globe, in addition to being the home of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Global red listing is one way to bring conservation attention to species of concern, but the network at large has expertise in many other aspects of conservation from Key Biodiversity Areas to conservation genetics and everything in between. The IUCN's Species Survival Network is an effective platform for engagement and reaches a wide global audience.

I'm pleased to announce that the leadership team of the Lichen Specialist Group (part of the IUCN's Species Survival Network) has expanded to include Co-Chair Manuela Dal Forno, and Rikke Reese Naesborg joins Jessica Allen on our Red List Authority team. A big welcome and thanks to them for stepping up. Last, we extend a sincere thanks to Christoph Scheidegger, who is stepping down after a long and inspiring tenure of leadership in the Lichen Specialist Group.

The group continues to host online and in-person workshops focusing on red listing and networking among experts. If you'd like to hear more or be involved, please fill in this form and we will add your name to our mailing list. We are planning a training workshop for lichen Red List assessments late in 2026.

On behalf of the IUCN's Lichen Specialist Group, we are looking forward to hearing from you,

Rebecca Yahr

REPORTS

THE ASSOCIATION FRANÇAISE DE LICHENOLOGIE TURNS 50

REPORT FROM THE AFL ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM, COL DU LAUTARET, 5-7 JUNE 2026

The Association Française de Lichénologie (AFL) celebrated its 50th anniversary during a symposium held at the Lautaret Alpine Garden (French Alps, 2,058 m elevation) —a particularly fitting venue for a community deeply attached to field lichenology. Around sixty participants gathered over three days for scientific presentations, a visit to the high-altitude botanical garden and its research station, and a lichenological excursion "in the footsteps of Clauzade and Rondon" through the surrounding alpine landscape. With speakers and participants from Austria, Belgium, France, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, and Norway, the symposium highlighted the international reach of an association that, fifty years after its foundation, remains as vibrant and active as ever.

Origins

The AFL was founded in 1976 at the initiative of Marie-Agnès Letrouit, then head of the Cryptogam Laboratory at Pierre and Marie Curie University (now Sorbonne University), Paris. The impetus was pragmatic: Aino Henssen had approached Marie-Agnès Letrouit about organising a field excursion in southern France, and establishing a formal association proved the most effective way to provide insurance coverage for such an international event —perhaps the best administrative decision French lichenology ever made. This excursion, held in July 1976 and organised by Georges Clauzade and Claude Roux at Marie-Agnès Letrouit's request, is considered the founding event of the Association.

The Association's statutes were officially published on 18 July 1976, with Georges Clauzade serving as its first President and Marie-Agnès Letrouit as Vice-President. The founding mission was threefold: (1) to promote lichenology and related sciences, (2) to facilitate exchanges among members, and (3) to foster collaboration with foreign lichenologists, particularly those from francophone, Latin, and Mediterranean countries.

Fifty Years of Development

In 1976, the AFL had 46 members including 12 based outside France, and approximately two-thirds were academic lichenologists. Today, the Association counts 297 members from 12 countries, including 36 living abroad. More than 90% of members are now highly skilled amateurs rather than professionals —a shift that reflects both the growing accessibility of lichenology and the AFL's longstanding commitment to education and outreach.

A Dynamic Association

Over the past five decades, the AFL has developed a wide range of activities: an annual exchange session at Fontainebleau, held continuously since the association was founded; annual field meetings across France; thematic seminars led by specialists; introductory and advanced training courses; and a bulletin that has continuously evolved over time. The AFL has also supported the establishment of active regional groups throughout France. On the scientific side, its members have contributed to numerous regional inventories and continue to play an active role in the preparation and updating of the *Catalogue des Lichens et Champignons Lichénicoles de France Métropolitaine* (Claude Roux et coll., four editions).

Participants at the AFL 50th Anniversary Symposium, Col du Lautaret, French Alps, 7 June 2026 (*Photo: F. Guilloux*).

Numbered individuals are identified as follows: 1. Pascal Frbezar; 2. Michel Bertrand; 3. David Vaudoré; 4. Thomas Beudin; 5. Gilles Détriché; 6. Gabriel Carlier; 7. Chantal Van Haluwyn; 8. Matthias Vust; 9. Hervé Cochini; 10. Olivier Gonnet; 11. Christian Richard; 12. Kathryn Mainil; 13. Elise Lebreton; 14. Théo (Theoderich) Homeyer; 15. Nicolas Magain; 16. Clémentine Mutillod; 17. Guillem Bourrié; 18. Cécile Guérin; 19. Joël Boustie; 20. Marine Cocquempot; 21. Isabelle Carlier; 22. Françoise Livet; 23. Philippe Blaise; 24. Dominique Détriché; 25. Katia Bertrand; 26. Christian Hurtado; 27. Claude Rémy; 28. Marie-Claude Derrien; 29. Patrick Derrien; 30. Ulli (Ulrike) Grube; 31. Solenn Ferron; 32. Paulin Beaudenon; 33. Christophe Perrier; 34. Catherine Biache; 35. Marine Dhermy ; 36. David Svoboda; 37. Gregory Agnello; 38. Laurent Gager; 39. Anne Boucault; 40. Marguerite Lachaud; 41. Françoise Guilloux; 42. Martin Grube; 43. Danièle Gonnet; 44. Nathan Bléchet; 45. Paul Archambaux.

A Rich and Varied Scientific Programme

The symposium opened with **Michel Bertrand** and **Chantal Van Haluwyn**, who retraced five decades of French lichenology, from the origins of the AFL to its current role in European lichenological research. The scientific sessions that followed covered a broad range of topics. **Christophe Perrier** and **Michel Bertrand** reviewed the history of lichenology at the Lautaret Alpine Garden, founded in 1899 by Prof. Jean-Paul Lachmann. Their presentation also paid tribute to the lichenologists who have left their mark on the site, including Lucie Kofler, Georges Clauzade, Yves Rondon, and Juliette Asta. **Sébastien Ibanez** and **Hervé Cochini** explored how saxicolous species manage to coexist on the same rock surface, using high-alpine rock communities as a model system.

The presentation took on a particularly poignant dimension: Sébastien Ibanez, the driving force behind the project and a researcher in community ecology, had lost his life in a mountaineering accident only three weeks earlier, at the age of 44. The talk was therefore delivered by Hervé Cochini and Sébastien's students, who paid tribute to both the scientist and the person behind the research. **Paul Archambaux** provided an overview of the often-overlooked genus *Lepraria* across France. **Nicolas Magain** and **Elise Lebreton** demonstrated how molecular tools are reshaping our understanding of species boundaries in the era of integrative taxonomy. **Françoise Lohézic-Le Dévéhat** and **Solenn Ferron** presented the contribution of chemical profiling to species identification and characterisation. **Claude Rémy** highlighted the rich lichen diversity of the Grand Briançonnais, while **Marc Boulanger, Nicolas Malle**, and **Chantal Van Haluwyn** presented the origins of *Lichens GO*, an ambitious citizen science programme designed to engage the public in monitoring air quality through lichens. **Mathias Vust** introduced the Swiss lichenological certification system and the educational tools developed to support it. On the environmental applications side, **Gregory Agnello** outlined a step-by-step approach to using lichens as bioindicators of atmospheric pollution. **Chantal Van Haluwyn**, **Yann Sellier**, and **Frédéric Vincq** reported on progress towards a national framework for the legal protection of lichens. **David Svoboda** presented results and perspectives arising from the application of the European standardised method for mapping lichen diversity in Czechia. **Philippe Choler** offered an original contribution on the use of lichen communities as indicators of seasonal snow-cover history in mountain environments. The symposium concluded with **Martin Grube**, who delivered a fascinating synthesis of the lichen as a complex multi-organism system —a fitting conclusion to a scientifically rich programme. The Saturday afternoon excursion through the landscapes surrounding the Col du Galibier provided a welcome complement to the indoor sessions and a reminder that lichenology remains, above all, a field science.

Selected moments from the scientific sessions (*Photos: E. Lebreton*).

Field excursion and lichen observations during the symposium. Top: field excursion in the alpine landscapes of the Col du Galibier. Bottom: participants (M. Grube, M. Bertrand, M. Vust, H. Cochini, O. Gonnet, U. Grube, J. Boustie, F. Guilloux and D. Vaudoré) examining lichens at the Lautaret Alpine Garden (*Photos: Elise Lebreton*).

A Call for Academic Renewal

Beyond the celebrations and tributes, the symposium also provided an opportunity to reflect on the place of lichenology within the French academic landscape. The situation is a matter of concern: despite a long and distinguished tradition, lichenology has gradually disappeared from French universities, and France currently has no academic positions fully dedicated to the discipline. Several

speakers highlighted the importance of renewing academic expertise in the field and ensuring the transmission of knowledge to future generations of researchers.

Conclusion

The AFL anniversary symposium at Lautaret was at once a celebration of the history of lichenology in France, a demonstration of the vitality of our association, an opportunity for scientific exchange with colleagues from across Europe, and a first gathering ahead of the IAL Symposium in Trieste, which will take place in one month.

For more information: www.afl-lichenologie.fr

Elise Lebreton, Danièle Gonnet, Chantal Van Haluwyn and Michel Bertrand.

PERSONALIA

MY LIFE WITH LICHENS – AND AN INVITATION TO A NEW GENERATION

Since my first publication in 1968, lichens have carried me through the full breadth of biology: anatomy, physiology, ecology, fossil studies, and even philosophy of science. Working in the German-Scandinavian tradition (Henssen & Jahns), my focus was never primarily taxonomic, but on understanding *growth*, *form*, and *development* in these remarkable symbiotic organisms.

In 1977, a special paper appeared in which I participated as third author: **Hallbauer, Jahns & Beltmann (1977), *Morphological and anatomical observations on some Precambrian plants from the Witwatersrand, South Africa*.** The original material from that study — which I examined using the SEM — has recently returned to me. **The material originates from the *Helena* locality in the Witwatersrand region (South Africa), where the original preparations were collected in 1974.**

With today's technologies — high-resolution SEM, synchrotron tomography, isotopic microanalysis, AI-based image interpretation, and astrobiological comparative methods — we can now ask questions that were impossible in 1974.

I therefore invite the international lichenological community to submit project proposals for a renewed investigation of this Witwatersrand material. I will make the original specimens available and would be pleased to collaborate on the scientific direction.

Important: I do **not** have project funding available myself. This means that **partners are required** — institutions or teams who can contribute resources, laboratory access, or technical expertise.

Given NASA's current interest in extremophile symbioses and terrestrial analogues for extraterrestrial life, I also hope that astrobiology groups will feel encouraged to participate. The combination of ancient symbiotic structures and modern analytical tools may offer new insights into the evolution of eukaryotic cooperation — a theme that has guided my scientific life.

I look forward to your ideas and to rediscovering this material together.

H.A. Beltman

NEW PHD FROM HELSINKI

Lilith Weber defended her PhD thesis "Subarctic lichen diversity: effects of climate change and snow" on April 24th, 2026, at the University of Helsinki. The dissertation consists of three chapters. In the first, Weber reviews the current state of knowledge on climate change impacts on lichens in polar and alpine ecosystems; https://doi.org/10.3897/mycokeys.128.173708. In the second, she links complete epiphytic lichen datasets from two localities in northern Finland to microclimatic measurements and satellite imagery at fine spatial scales to identify the environmental factors that shape species distribution and community structure; https://doi.org/10.22541/au.175672446.64811797/v1 (preprint). In the third, she documents previously undescribed biodiversity within crustose epiphytic lichens in the Finnish subarctic, specifically the *Biatora vernalis*- and *B. meiocarpa*-groups; https://doi.org/10.35535/pfsyst-2023-0011. The summary of the thesis can be accessed here: http://hdl.handle.net/10138/595308. The thesis supervisors were Dr. Annina Kantelinen and Dr. Leena Myllys from the University of Helsinki and Assistant Professor Pekka Niittynen from the University of Oulu; Dr. Rebecca Yahr from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh acted as the opponent.

The public defence – left to right: Rebecca Yahr, Jouko Rikkinen and Lilith Weber (*Photo: K. Kreuzer*).

LIST OF SOCIETIES

Australasia: Australasian Lichen Society. Info: W.M. Malcolm, Box 320, Nelson, New Zealand 7040. Phone: (+64) 3-545-1660, e-mail: *nancym@micro-opticspress.com*
Journal: *Australasian Lichenology*, web-page: http://nhm2.uio.no/botanisk/lav/RLL/AL/

Brazil: Grupo Brasileiro de Liquenólogos (GBL), contact: Dr. Adriano Afonso Spielmann, (e-mail: *adriano.spielmann@ufms.br*), e-mail: BrazilianLichens@gmail.com;
web-page: https://brazilianlichens.wixsite.com/website

Central Europe: Bryologisch-lichenologische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Mitteleuropa (BLAM). Contact: Ulrike Ruprecht, Hellbrunner Straße 34, 5020 Salzburg, Austria, e-mail *ulrike.ruprecht@plus.ac.at*, web-page: http://blam-bl.de/
Journals: *Herzogia* https://blam-bl.de/herzogia/herzogia-ueberblick.html, *Herzogiella*, web-page: https://blam-bl.de/herzogiella-oben.html

Colombia: Grupo Colombiano de Liquenología (GCOL). Info: Bibiana Moncada, e-mail: *bibianamoncada@gmail.com*;
web-page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/485251978343916

Czech Republic: Bryological and Lichenological Section of the Czech Botanical Society. Chairperson: Eva Mikulášková: *evamikul@gmail.com*
web-page: https://botanospol.cz/cs/bls
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The cover-page illustration

Seirophora villosa (Ascomycota: Teloschistaceae) from Tuscany (Italy). This species is restricted to a few natural habitats in the Tyrrhenian Italy and is listed on the Italian Red List as "Endangered" (*Photo: Lucia Muggia*).