



# FIRST LATIN AMERICAN SYMPOSIUM ON PLANT CYTOGENETICS AND EVOLUTION

July 20-23, 1999  
Universidade Federal de Pernambuco  
Recife, PE, Brasil

## PREFACE

Latin America plant cytogenetics has been extensively studied by several groups working independently throughout the region, focusing on plant breeding as well as on cytotaxonomic and evolutionary studies. Especially before the eighties, the main outlet for the scientific production of such research groups has been in regional journals, frequently non-indexed and hard to access for foreign researchers (or even those from their own countries). Due to each region's historical and cultural peculiarities, on the one hand, and floristic and biogeographic characteristics on the other, these groups have often worked independently with the same plant species, using similar technical approaches, but with only very limited contact between them. That has been the case with both maize and beans, widely cultivated and studied throughout the continent, as well as with many wild species, such as those of the genera *Hippeastrum* and *Paspalum* and the family Commelinaceae.

More recently, this picture has begun to change with the attempt to index the main scientific periodicals of each country, as well as with the facilities offered by new communication media. A decisive step to bring these groups into closer contact is the establishment of an appropriate forum for debating research advances in this area. With this in mind, the *First Latin American Symposium on Plant Cytogenetics and Evolution* was held at the Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, in Recife, Brazil, half way between Mexico and Argentina, 21-23 July 1999. The event included participants from Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Uruguay, along with a guest from Germany, Dr. Wilfried Morawetz,

who has vast research experience in Latin America. In spite of the trans-hemispheric dimension of the Latin-American continent, this symposium was planned as a relatively small, periodic meeting of specialists in plant cytogenetics and evolution. It was free of the drawbacks of parallel sessions and unnecessary formalities, allowing research students and professors to enjoy this time to the fullest, interacting as a friendly community.

Of the 21 lectures presented, 16 can be found in the present volume. Among the lecturers, one who stands out is Prof. Juan Hunziker, honored by the symposium for his pioneering research in South American plant cytogenetics, resulting in around one hundred publications and the training of many cytogeneticists.

The organizers are very grateful to those colleagues from other Brazilian research centers and from abroad who believe in this new forum and came to Recife, bringing the symposium into being. Equally important was the financial support from the Universidade Federal de Pernambuco (UFPE), Fundação de Amparo à Ciência e Tecnologia do Estado de Pernambuco (FACEPE), Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq), Sociedade Brasileira de Genética (SBG), and several other institutions that helped individual researchers to take part in the symposium.

*Marcelo Guerra*  
*Symposium President*