

CONFERENCE REPORT

Dendrochronological Symposium at the NBCB in Gramado, Brazil



On the occasion of the 57th National Botanical Congress of Brazil (NBCB) held in Gramado, Brazil from November 6 to 10, 2006, a symposium entitled “Dendrochronology in Brazil, State of the Art and Perspectives” was organized. The symposium was structured around five conferences held by invited speakers followed by extensive discussion on the various topics. The speakers looked back over what was known in the past, and addressed case studies and work in progress focusing on new challenges in tropical dendrochronology. The talks dealt with topics such as tree-ring formation on tropical trees through

studies of cambial and phenological periodicity, special methods for the study of tree ring formation, and the increase in knowledge of dendroclimatological, ecological and forestry potentiality of species and regions of Brazil. An enthusiastic audience of more than 70 people, most of them of younger researchers and students, proves that interest in tropical tree rings continues to grow.

The general assumption is that the myth that tropical trees lack periodical growth markers in their xylem has finally been put to rest. A growing body of evidence shows that many tropical tree species are capable of

organizing wood structures recognizable by specific boundary layers in tree rings, so that many of them can be cross-dated and consequently be used in studies of growth rates, ecological modeling, and responses to climate and other environmental limiting influences.

The tropical ecosystems are a key factor in the global equilibrium of the Earth, with a strong influence on carbon exchange with the atmosphere and the global water cycle. These important subjects emphasize the need to dramatically expand tree-ring studies in the Neotropics. Targets in the immediate future should be the dendrochronological exploration of new species and areas, particularly in the regions with strong seasonal climates that provide the necessary stimulus for ring formation.

As a corollary of this successful symposium, a proposal was made to construct a web forum devoted to the

discussion and interchange of information, experience and suggestions concerning the many topics related to the tropics of South America. This forum is now working and it is possible to participate at the following address: dendrotropical-l@jatoba.esalq.usp.br.

In short, the feeling leaved by this symposium of dendrochronology in Brazil is that a fine opportunity exists to construct a variety of interdisciplinary projects where dendrochronologists can share knowledge and expertise with members of the wood anatomical community, ecologists, ecophysiologicals, climatologists and many other disciplines familiarized with tropical tree rings.

Paulo C. Botosso, Claudio S. Lisi, Juliano M. Oliveira, Valerio D. Pillar, Fidel A. Roig and Mario Tomazello Filho.