



**Acta Botanica
Mexicana**

In the framework of the fiftieth anniversary of the Instituto de Ecología, A.C.

Acta Botanica Mexicana

Pioneering Open Science journal in Mexico and leader in Latin American botany

Marie-Stéphanie Samain¹ , Héctor Armando Contreras Hernández² 

The Instituto de Ecología, A.C. celebrates today its 50th anniversary (August 7, 1975). Its national impact contributed to the definition of ecology as a scientific discipline, biodiversity conservation, and natural resource management for land use planning, as well as the temporal and spatial analysis of biodiversity. Research focused on taxonomy, biogeography, and behavior of beetles, studies of vegetation in arid zones and vertebrate species populations, the role of fire in vegetation dynamics, the development of criteria for evaluating the importance of natural areas, and the analysis of methodological and operational elements for designing conservation plans with the participation of civil society. In this way, ecological studies affecting altitudinal variation in mountain communities were expanded.

Collaboration was a strategic component in the international context: with the Museum Nationale d'Histoire Naturelle and the École Normale Supérieure (France); the Academy of Sciences of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR); the Doñana Biological Station (Spain), and the University of Arizona and California State University (USA). Established researchers from these institutions supported research and the training of new talent. This was the role of ecology as a generator of long-term guidelines according to the postulates of MAB-UNESCO, which included germplasm protection areas (Gallina and Martínez, 2016).

Without a doubt, the formation of the Reserves La Michilía and the Mapimí Desert Laboratory were the setting that made visible the conservation of species such as the great desert tortoise (*Gopherus flavomarginatus*) and the studies of the white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) (Guevara, 2024). Over the decades, collaborations multiplied and research lines were refined that remain today as a testament to the work: the La Mancha Coastal Research Center (CICOLMA), the Francisco Javier Clavijero Botanical Garden, the Cloud Forest Sanctuary, the scientific collections of the Herbarium of the Instituto de Ecología, A.C. (XAL), the Herbarium of the Instituto de Ecología, A.C. of the Bajío Regional Center (IEB), the Entomological Collection (IEXA), the Dr. Faustino Miranda wood collection and the Library of Bird Sounds of Mexico (BISAM). The institutional objectives are complemented by the training of 1100 graduates from our four graduate programs: Master of Science, Doctor of Science, the National Doctorate in Agroecology, and the Specialization in Community Well-being.

¹Editor-in-Chief of Acta Botanica Mexicana, Instituto de Ecología, A.C., Red de Diversidad Biológica del Occidente Mexicano, Avenida Lázaro Cárdenas 253, 61600 Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, Mexico.

²General Director of the Instituto de Ecología, A.C., Carretera antigua a Coatepec 351, Col. El Haya, 91073 Xalapa-Enríquez, Veracruz, Mexico.

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Currently, INECOL is made up of 12 Academic Networks and a total of 413 employees: 135 researchers, 100 academic technicians, and 87 administrative staff, 91 employees paid by own resources (INECOL, 2025). This is also reflected in the solid track record of its four institutional journals: *Acta Zoológica Mexicana (nueva serie)*, 1984), *Acta Botanica Mexicana* (1988), *Madera y Bosques* (1995), and *Eco-lógico*, a popular science journal (2020).

Acta Botanica Mexicana was founded by Dr. Jerzy Rzedowski in 1988 at the Bajío Regional Center in Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, which recently celebrated its 40th anniversary. To date, 132 issues have been published with 1183 articles on botanical topics in the broadest sense, focusing on the American continent. It has an impact factor in the Journal Citation Reports database since 2009. This impact factor has gradually increased, currently approaching the coveted “1,” a tremendous achievement for a journal that began its existence primarily with taxonomic works, which generally receive few citations.

However, from biological and human perspectives, the real impact of *Acta Botanica Mexicana* is much greater. By July 2025, 414 new species of plants and fungi have been published for science. Many of these species are undoubtedly threatened by the various factors affecting our planet's biodiversity. Furthermore, behind these nearly 1200 articles and more than 400 new species are the efforts of 3242 authors from 37 countries, who not only wanted to publicize the results of their research, but like also needed these publications to obtain a degree, a position, a promotion, or a project.

In this highly competitive environment, where the human element is lost in favor of the profits of greedy multinational publishers, we follow Jerzy Rzedowski's philosophy by providing comprehensive support to our authors, in order to meet the growing need to publish in indexed journals. Although the authorities of the Secretaría de Ciencia, Humanidades, Tecnología e Innovación are considering giving less importance to the impact factor and international journals in the evaluation of academics in the National System of Researchers, in favor of promoting national journals, this will be a time-consuming process, not only in Mexico but in all the countries of origin of our authors.

Starting in September 2024, *Acta Botanica Mexicana* incorporated into its editorial policies the recommendation that authors of manuscripts submitted for publication deposit data that allow for replication or validation of the results of the research to which they are linked. The journal has adopted the Dataverse SciELO Mexico data repository, an ideal platform for complying with Open Science best practices, becoming the second Mexican journal to join this repository. Starting in September 2025, the deposit of all the aforementioned information that cannot be included in articles due to the very large datasets will be mandatory.

In this way, *Acta Botanica Mexicana* takes the lead as an important reference in botany in Latin America. Publishing in our journal, as well as consulting it, will continue to be completely free. Its Latin title (without an accent on “*Botanica*”) remains the same, and the word “*Mexicana*” highlights its identity, without diminishing its international reach in Spanish-speaking countries of the American continent. Spanish is its primary language, giving it prestige as a scientific language, although each article includes an abstract in English, and articles in English (with a summary in Spanish) are also accepted.

The editorial team is relatively small, with an editor-in-chief, three associate editors, and two technical editors. The editor-in-chief oversees the editorial process for most of the manuscripts received and assigns manuscripts on specific topics to the associate editors. After ensuring that a received manuscript falls within the scope of our journal and meets the guidelines for authors, specialists are invited to provide peer review within a three-week period. This step in the editorial process takes the longest to complete because we rely on volunteer work within a limited timeframe. However, the first editorial decision can generally be sent within one month of receiving a manuscript.

In the event of a favorable decision, authors have two weeks to submit an updated version of their manuscript, which will be reviewed again by peer reviewers if a resubmission request was made. If peer review is not required, the editor and technical editors will conduct a technical review to ensure that the manuscript meets the reviewers' requirements and the author guidelines. After this, authors have another two weeks to submit their updated man-



uscript, and if it has satisfactorily met the requirements, the manuscript is accepted and assigned to one of the two technical editors for proofreading. After a detailed review by the technical editor in charge, it is shared again with the authors with questions or comments to be addressed, followed by the galley layout, which is reviewed in detail by the editor-in-chief. The average time between manuscript submission and acceptance is five months. The editorial team strives throughout this process to assist authors in publishing their work with the highest possible quality.

From the heart of one of the most biodiverse regions on our planet, we continue to serve the botanical community in Mexico and Latin America and are grateful for the collaboration of a growing group of authors, reviewers, and readers.

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