



Personal report

Aquatic Botany special issue dedication to Samuel Curry Snedaker (22 May 1938–21 March 2005)

This special issue of *Aquatic Botany* is inspired on the well-known UNESCO publication by Snedaker and Snedaker (1984). More than a decade has passed since another major issue on the biodiversity and function of mangrove ecosystems has been published (Field and Whittaker, 1998). The contacts for publishing the present special issue were established on a series of Australian mangrove and wetland conferences and workshops in 2006. Our aim was to provide a series of comprehensive reviews on mangrove ecology, in particular on applications in forestry and coastal zone management. We highlight the existence of a parallel special issue focusing more on macrobenthic fauna from mangroves (Lee and Dittmann, 2008). Finally, we refer to Aaron Ellison's preface to this *Aquatic Botany* Special Issue on 'Mangrove ecology—applications in forestry and coastal zone management' for a state-of-the-art of mangrove ecosystems (Ellison, 2008), before coming back to the inspiration by and dedication to a great man.

In this dedication we want to express our respect to the late Sam Snedaker with a few anecdotes:

Al Ain, United Arab Emirates, December 1996. *I still cannot believe Nico sent me to my first international conference abroad as a starting PhD student. Have you seen the program? Snedaker, Duke, Saenger, Lee, Field, Ball, Popp, . . . what on Earth am I going to present to these people? Thé Snedaker is going to be there!* But then came the announcement of my presentation . . .

Immediately after that I was confronted with Sam's charisma. He calmly came towards me and made me feel as if I were one of the big names on that program. He gave me so much confidence during the talks we had that I was convinced there was a mangrove future out there.

Miami, Florida, September 1999. Coming back from the New Orleans conference of the Estuarine Research Foundation there was only one stop to make for us before crossing the Atlantic again, and that was Sam's office in Miami and the New World mangroves nearby. The most remarkable sight that is burnt in our minds is *Avicennia germinans* cut like a hedge on the nearby golf course, and the most remarkable remembrance of Sam was his hospitality when he invited us into his small office.

With the courtesy of Rafael J. Araujo we use some of the beautiful words with which he described Sam, which is exactly how we remember him and how we feel about him.

"I always wanted to know how Sam felt about this legacy. Was he proud of it? Did it open doors for him? – He would look at me and say nothing. You see, there was a detachment about Sam, a mystery about him that unsettled many. Sam was especially good at concentrating large thoughts into a little space, at

getting to the heart of things, and at preserving valuable information. His words were few, but carried weight. I loved him for all he knew, taught me and said; but also for his silence. I miss his quiet entry into the office, his unobtrusiveness, his sense of privacy and calm. . ."

Sam, this mangrove issue of *Aquatic Botany* is in your memory. A memory that we will keep alive, and a memory that makes us realise to whom this poem of mine was destined:

*When you watch the ocean we were given,
And look at how the waves are driven,
Towards any tropical coast,
Towards a forest, towards a host.
Towards a ground made for breeding,
Where one is lodged or comes for feeding,
Where the water meets the land,
Where you only find this plant.*

*Once a seedling must have stranded,
Making this site so enchanted,
Lots of creeks, lots of roots,
Lots of curious floating fruits.
Unusual systems for dispersing,
Exotic life forms there for nursing,
Swimming, jumping, climbing trees,
Fish and crabs and more of these.*

*Many threats is what they face,
Try surviving their own ways,
All subjected to hard stress,
But still thriving nonetheless,
What on Earth is this unlike?
Which plant is forming a living dyke?
Who is it rooting in the sea?
The mangrove tree,
The mangrove tree.*

FDG

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Available online 10 March 2008