

Lichens as a Tool for Interpretation of Environmental Changes and Management

University of Lisbon (Portugal), 28 January - 1 February 2013

The course “Lichens as a Tool for Interpretation of Environmental Changes and Management” held at the Centre for Environmental Biology (CBA) at the University of Lisbon (Portugal), 28 January - 1 February 2013 is one of the advanced courses organized by the CBA annually for Masters and PhD students, and Post-doctorates. Initially conceived to deepen their knowledge of lichens and their potential applications at a national level, we soon realized that international was better!

Hence this was the first international lichen course organized in Portugal and the first international CBA course, with nine participants from institutions in Denmark, Italy and Portugal (photo 1), and if the participants enjoyed the course as much as the organizers did, we can really consider it a success. Cristina Máguas, Sofia Augusto, Paula Matos, Silvana Munzi and Pedro Pinho provided the participants with the basics of lichen biology and ecology, biomonitoring and data analysis methods for the interpretation of environmental conditions and changes using lichens. Great importance was given to the practical and personal work. Several hours were dedicated to lichen identification (photo 2), insufficient for becoming an expert, but enough to understand what is fundamentally necessary. Simple experiments were designed and performed, such as to test the effects of nitrogen or acidity on the photosynthetic parameters of sensitive and tolerant species, and a foretaste of data analysis with ArcGis was provided.

A one-day excursion at the CBA Field Station “Herdade da Ribeira Abaixo” was organized to utilize the acquired knowledge on monitoring method in the field (photo 3) which is mainly covered by cork-oak woodland (“montado”) and is crossed by several temporary small streams. The “montado” is a typical Mediterranean woodland ecosystem and provides one of the best examples of demonstrating the relative harmony between long-standing human activities and the conservation of biodiversity. This ecosystem is considered a habitat of EU interest not only from a botanical point of view, but also because it supports a fauna of high conservation importance. On behalf of the organizers, I would like to thank all the participants for their enthusiasm and commitment which made this experience so gratifying. Special thanks go to Claudia Oliveira (CBA secretariat) for her help in the organization. Since we enjoyed the course so much, we are already planning the second. We’ll let you know!

For additional information see: <http://ecofun.fc.ul.pt/Activities/lichens-course>

Silvana Munzi



Photo 1. Organizers and participants during the closing ceremony; from left: Sofia Augusto, Pedro Pinho, Joana Lage (Instituto Tecnológico e Nuclear, Portugal), Nuno Canha (Instituto Tecnológico e Nuclear, Portugal), Cristina Máguas, João P. Santos (University of Lisbon, Portugal), Guillaume Hoareau (University of Copenhagen, Denmark), Mia Mouridsen (University of Copenhagen, Denmark), Emilie Hjorth Ceylan (University of Copenhagen, Denmark), Ana Buchadas (University of Lisbon, Portugal), Silvana Munzi, Alice Grassi (University of Siena, Italy), Paula Matos. [Minia Antelo (University of Lisbon, Portugal), not present in the picture, was the ninth participant.]



Photo 2. Lichen identification during the practical lessons.



Photo 3. Lichen diversity survey during the field excursion at the Herdade da Ribeira Abaixo.