



With the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us saw ourselves isolated from our colleagues, having to change our work routines and suddenly way too familiar with videoconferencing and all the different platforms that our institutions chose to use. In this sometimes weird and worrying reality, some of us synantherologists, mainly based in the USA, started a small online journal club, where we could meet and discuss some of the amazing new research being done around the world. Soon, members began inviting the authors of some papers to participate in the discussion and they, in turn, invited friends from other countries, and as a result, the collective wish to reactivate TICA gained momentum. We then started to discuss what TICA would look like and how it could benefit our global community of Compositae enthusiasts. These initial discussions resulted in the decision of rebooting the Compositae Newsletter in the form of *Capitulum*, which you have in your hands now, and in TICATalks, a series of monthly online seminars. TICATalks was created as a mean of bringing the Compositae community together, reaching researchers all around the globe and showcasing the work being done in the family. After a few months of thinking about a format for presentations and potential speakers, we launched TICATalks in January 2021 and since then have hosted six sessions.

Our inaugural talk ([Figure 1](#)), on January 25th, 2021, was a homage to the late Dr. Vicki Funk, which was a driving force in getting the Compositae community working together and coming up with big questions that still need to be solved regarding the family's evolution. In this session, Dr. Jennifer Ackerfield (Denver Botanic Gardens, USA) gave a short talk about a new species of thistle endemic to the Western USA that is being named in honor of Vicki Funk and gave some updates on her work with *Cirsium* Mill. Dr. Mauricio Bonifacino (Universidad de la República, Uruguay) did a great job in showing how TICA came to be, how the Global Compositae Database is being assembled and what to expect in the near future.

In February, we had a slightly different format, the session having been made up of three talks of approximately 15-minutes. Graduate student Erika Moore (University of Memphis, USA) gave a talk about a rare species of sunflower endemic to the Southeastern USA, as well as about the efforts being made to reevaluate its genetic diversity. Gabriel Johnson (Smithsonian Institution, USA) introduced us to some of the common misconceptions about preservation of tissue for DNA extractions and presented some creative alternatives to silica-gel. Finally, Dr. Bort Edwards (Yale University, USA)

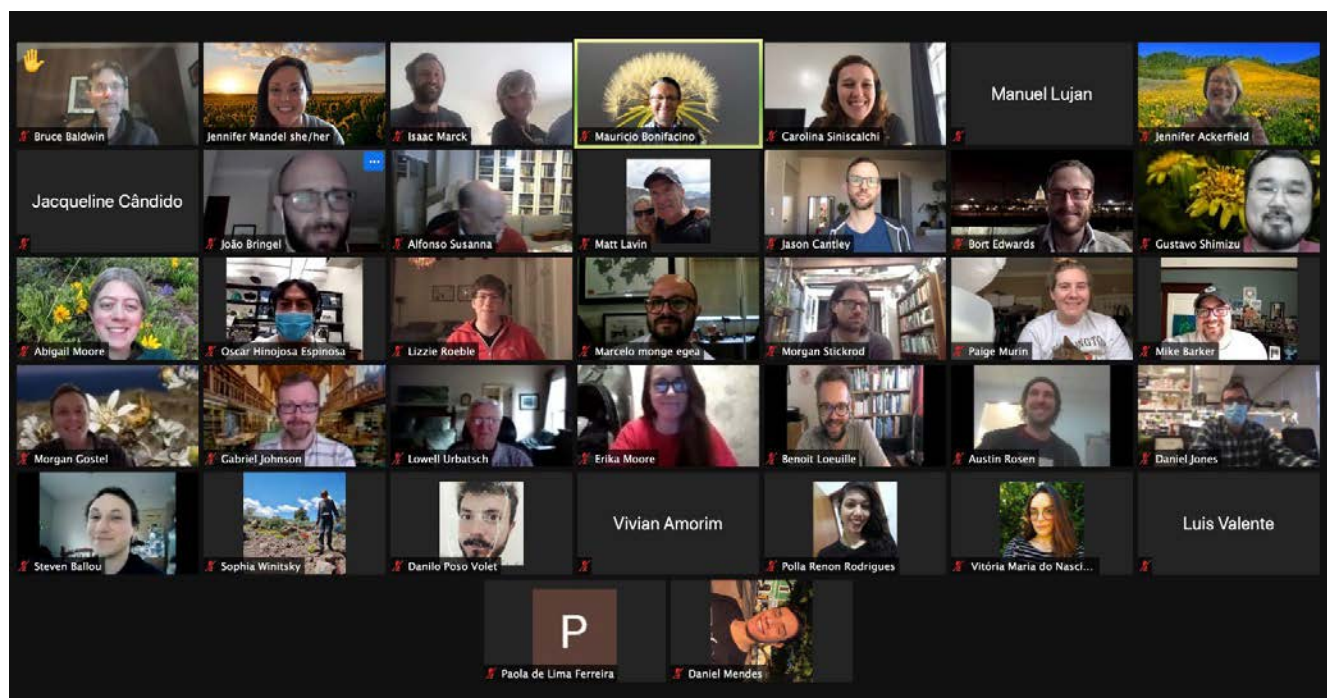


Figure 1. Screenshot of the zoom session of the first Tica Talks held on January 25th 2021.

shared some of his effort in assembling an extensive database of Compositae occurrences and what this data can tell us about Compositae evolution.

In March, we went on a trip around the Americas, listening to field stories and exciting discoveries. In this series of short talks, graduate student Isaac Lichter-Marck (University of California Berkeley, USA) talked about and showed us some of his fieldwork in the Baja California peninsula, which is aimed at systematic studies of the rock daisies from tribe Perityleae B.G.Baldwin. Following Isaac, graduate student Oscar Hinojosa Espinosa (University of California Davis, USA) showed some of the fieldwork he carried out in his studies of the tribe Tageteae and the ethnobotany of Mexican Compositae. Dr. Naomi Fraga (California Botanic Garden, USA) then showed us the exciting and rare Compositae from southern California. Moving from North to South America, Dr. Carolina M. Siniscalchi (Mississippi State University, USA) showed us a small mountain range in Southeastern Brazil, where numerous undescribed species have been found, including at least seven new Compositae taxa. Finally, Dr. Mauricio Bonifacino (Universidad de la República, Uruguay) showed us some of the striking Compositae found in Patagonia and some of the closest relatives to the family, such as Calyceraceae.

In April, we shifted our focus to the Pacific and to some of the efforts being made to understand the local flora. Dr. Tim Gallaher (Bishop Museum, USA) showed us how he and his team are assembling a modern taxonomic system for the e-Flora of Hawaii and using Compositae as a case study. Dr. Jason Cantley (San Francisco State University, USA) then showed some of the efforts he, together with a group of collaborators, is making to understand plant evolution and distributions across the Pacific islands and coasts, including the assembly of Hawaiian flora.

In May, we continued our journey around the globe, this time stopping in Australia. Dr. Alexander Schmidt-Lebuhn (CSIRO, Australia) gave an excellent talk, showing some of the diversity and distribution patterns of Australian Compositae, then presenting some recent work in the systematics of the megagenus *Senecio* L. and the efforts to understand the evolution of tribe Gnaphalieae Lecoq & Juill.

In June, our overarching theme was morphological features of the family. MSc. Erandi Sánchez Chávez (Instituto de Ecología Veracruz, Mexico) introduced us to the climbing genus *Hidalgoa* La Llave and its evolutionary history. Dr. Jorge Crisci and Dr. Liliana Katinas (Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentina) presented some of the studies being done about

the striking secondary heads of Nassauvieae Cass. and the direction this exciting research is taking.

Our seminars have had strong attendance, and the recordings of the sessions uploaded to the Compositae Alliance Youtube channel have also been watched many times. We're striving to compile a diverse array of speakers, to truly represent all the research being carried out globally. However, even with our best efforts, most of our talks have been focused on the North-South America axis. We would love to have speakers from Asia and Africa in our next sessions. Our flexible format, including short, medium and long talks, is also ideal to have a mix of ongoing and finalized research presented, which can be beneficial for graduate students looking to present some of their thesis research, for example. We also hope that our frequent meetings will pave the way to organizing an in-person TICA meeting sometime soon.

Our next seminar will be in August 2021, where we'll have a whole session dedicated to the Gochnatieae Panero & V.A.Funk, with talks by Dr. Morgan Gostel (Botanical Research Institute of Texas, USA), Dr. Nadia Roque (Universidade Federal da Bahia, Brazil) and Dr. Gisela Sancho (Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentina). In September, we will have Dr. Gustavo Heiden (Embrapa Clima Temperado, Brazil), who will share his studies in the mega-genus genus *Baccharis* L. and how our understanding changed with new phylogenetic hypotheses. Our speakers for October and November have not been confirmed yet, and they could include you! If you are interested in presenting a talk, fill out the form the available in the compositae.org website. We look forward to seeing you next time!

The TICATalks Team