

The Society for



ECONOMIC BOTANY, INC.

DEDICATED TO THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE USES OF PLANTS BY PEOPLE

July 5, 2007

Dear SEB members,

On behalf of the Society for Economic Botany I would like to thank David Lentz and colleagues for a very successful 48th Annual Meeting in Chicago, noteworthy, among other things, for having the largest number of registrants on record for an Annual Meeting. We are indebted to our sponsors which included Lake Forest College (whose beautiful campus and accommodating community provided an ideal venue), the Chicago Botanical Garden, the University of Illinois at Chicago, the Field Museum of Natural History, and Northwestern University. The full-day symposium, "In the Service of Human Health: the Search for New Plant-based Therapies," brought into focus the current research on the known and potential value of medicinal plants. It was well received and we congratulate the organizing committee Djaja D. Soejarto (Chair), Scott Franzblau, Charlotte Gyllenhaal, and Gail Mahady.

From January 27th to the 30th, 2007, I was fortunate to be one of 44 participants in an Ethnobotanical Summit that was held at the National Tropical Botanical Garden in Kaua`i, Hawaii. In light of the serious environmental challenges we face today, especially global warming and the increasing loss of cultural and biological diversity, the group decided to issue a statement on the importance of economic botany/ethnobotany for "providing some of the solutions towards more sustainable living." This statement, called "The Kaua`i Declaration" and titled "Ethnobotany, the Science of Survival," was published in the Spring 2007 issue of the Society's Journal (Vol. 61, No. 1). I encourage SEB members and readers of the journal to consider its content. Those of us who are committed to understanding all "past, present and future uses of plants" from the unique interdisciplinary perspective of economic botany have a special responsibility at this critical moment and we should embrace the challenge. An important aspect of meeting the challenge is the continued internationalization of our society. At the start of his tenure during the banquet of the 2006 annual meeting in Chaing Mai, Thailand, the Society's immediate past-president, Will McClatchey, conducted a survey. In his July 30, 2006, presidential address he reported that "the most consistently expressed vision of the new SEB is that we become truly global with greater numbers from outside of North America and with more meetings on other continents and islands that encourage collaborative partnerships within the ranks of an expanded SEB."

As the new SEB president, I encourage members to become actively involved in the Society's affairs: be an ambassador capable of speaking to the relevance of economic botany in addressing current global issues; present the results of your research at the Annual Meetings and publish your results in the SEB journal; join a committee and be an enthusiastic participant; make suggestions for improvements whether they involve the organization of the society itself, the conduct of the meetings, or the publication of the journal; encourage your colleagues and friends who are not members to join the Society; and if you are in a position to do so, promote the Society's objectives by making a meaningful donation to the Schultes Endowment Fund (which benefits students who submit outstanding proposals for research projects in economic botany and ethnobotany), the President's Fund for Student Participation in Meetings, the International Partnership Fund (which allows our members and colleagues in other parts of the world to obtain the levels of funding necessary to present their

research at the annual meetings), and the Senior Scholars Award (which honors the respected “elders” of our society for their lifetime of service).

Our 2008 Annual Meeting—the 49th Annual Meeting of the Society—will be held at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, from June 1st to June 5th and is being organized by Mary Eubanks. The meeting will be hosted by the Sarah P. Duke Gardens at Duke University, the North Carolina Botanical Garden at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the J. C. Raulston Arboretum at North Carolina State University. The featured symposium, “Building Upon the Legacy of Botanical Education and Traditional Knowledge,” will focus on the diverse roles botanical gardens have played and continue to play in botanical education. The keynote speaker will be Peter Raven, Director of the Missouri Botanical Garden. As noted in the preliminary schedule, “A key objective of the symposium will be to put the teaching and dissemination of botanical knowledge into historical perspective, characterize the changes in university curricula and programs today, elucidate how those changes are impacting the teaching of botany, delineate the challenges we face, discuss how botanical gardens can embrace economic botany/ethnobotany to exhibit creative leadership for breathing new life into programs that will proactively shape a secure future for botany.” As usual, contributed papers and workshops will be the mainstays of the meeting. Members and prospective members are encouraged to present their latest research results. Details of the 2008 Annual Meeting and registration information can be found on the SEB website—www.econbot.org. I look forward to seeing you all in Durham, North Carolina.

Sincerely

John Rashford
SEB President, 2007-8

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SEB is a 501 c(3) non-profit organization registered in the state of NY.

The Society for Economic Botany (SEB) was established in 1959 to foster and encourage scientific research, education, and related activities on the past, present, and future uses of plants, and the relationship between plants and people, and to make the results of such research available to the scientific community and the general public through meetings and publications.