

Date: January 12, 2010
Contact: Public Relations Department
Phone: (314) 577-0254 or (314) 577-5141 office;
(314) 302-3433 cell (*media use only*)
E-mail: karen.hagenow@mobot.org or julie.bierach@mobot.org
(*media use only*)

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For Immediate Release

**‘SCIENCE CAFÉ’ REVEALS CHALLENGES AND PROGRESS
IN MAPPING NEOTROPICAL PLANT DIVERSITY**

WHAT: Science Café – stimulating conversation in an informal setting
WHEN: Thursday, Feb. 18 7 to 9 p.m.
WHERE: Herbie’s Restaurant, 405 N. Euclid Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63108
COST: FREE; food and beverages available for purchase
SPONSORS: Presented by the Saint Louis Science Center and the Missouri Botanical Garden
INFO: www.mobot.org; www.slsc.org; (314) 289-4424

(ST. LOUIS): Join Dr. Ivan Jimenez, assistant curator at the Missouri Botanical Garden (MBG) for “**Mapping Neotropical Plant Diversity: Challenges and Progress,**” at **Science Café,** Thursday, **Feb. 18 at 7 p.m.** The evening of informal discussion will be held at Herbie’s Restaurant, 405 N. Euclid Ave. in St. Louis. The event is free to attend. Food and beverages are available for purchase.

Despite centuries of work, biologists don’t yet understand geographic variation in plant diversity. Much of the problem stems from difficulties in describing basic patterns of plant diversity. Work by the Missouri Botanical Garden in Central and South America, as well as in Madagascar, are starting to unveil patterns of diversity that seem to challenge long-standing ideas about plant diversity. At Science Café, Jimenez will discuss his work, focused on confronting ideas about geographic variation in plant diversity against data emerging from decades of exploration by botanists of the Missouri Botanical Garden across the Neotropics. This region is thought to be one of

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ADD ONE: Science Cafe

the most biologically diverse on earth. According to MBG botanists, one-sixth of the world's plant species occur in just three countries – Colombia, Ecuador and Peru – an area one-third the size of the US. MBG studies into plant diversity patterns help inform conservation agencies on how to best preserve plants diversity across the world.

Science Café offers stimulating conservation about issues in the news each month. The series is presented by the Saint Louis Science Center and the Missouri Botanical Garden.

For more information, visit www.mobot.org, www.slsc.org or call (314) 577-9400 or (314) 289-4474.

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NOTE: Digital images available by request. Download media materials at www.mobot.org/press.

The Missouri Botanical Garden's mission is "to discover and share knowledge about plants and their environment, in order to preserve and enrich life." Today, 151 years after opening, the Missouri Botanical Garden is a National Historic Landmark and a center for science, conservation, education and horticultural display.