

## **Project Update: May 2014**

I started to update the fungi collection (Ganodermataceae) in the National Botanical Garden herbaria. I detected some problems with incorrect identifications. I made a database and I started to incorporate my details about my own specimens from my new field studies. (I collected and preserved fungi species from Viñales)

I called a meeting of the mycologists of all the country and we celebrated the National Mycological Meeting because we needed to know what kind of work being done on fungi in Cuba. We decided to create The Mycological Section within the SOCUBOT (Cuban Botanical Society); we don't have a National Mycological Association so this is the first step to make something like this. I am selecting the coordinator of this section and I will try to carry out my responsibility correctly. On the other hand, this meeting got some students interested in mycology together at the same place. This point is very important to the future conservation work. The majority of works were about species pathogens in Cuba and their effect on agriculture and the human health. Only two presentations were about fungi conservation because there are many problems in applying IUCN conservation criteria and the poor knowledge on the diversity and distribution of some groups. We agreed to work very hard because the Cuban people need to know about the importance of fungi and their conservation.

I visited two communities in Havana and I appreciated the low knowledge about fungi; some of them didn't know that fungi are neither plant nor animal. We saw some fruit bodies of *Ganoderma weberianum* (an important and rare species in Cuba) destroyed by some children because they didn't know what this was. We spoke with these people and they understood everything. We decided to make some special literature for children because the fungi world is very complicated for them.

We are working in the field guide from Viñales National Park (an important place into our country). This book will be useful to develop conservation actions and will provide valuable environmental education material. In addition, we contributed with another field guide, this material is in preparation and will be published very soon.