**A succesful course “Bees and Pollination” in Costa Rica, August 2016**

In August 2016 we held the international course BEES AND POLLINATION in Costa Rica at the Centro de Investigaciones Apicolas (CINAT) of the Universidad Nacional (UNA) in Heredia. The maximum number of twenty participants came from all over the world, mostly Europe.

A major objective of this academic course was to introduce participants in the diversity of bee-plant relations focusing on the wealth of pollination syndromes to be studied in Costa Rica. The now worldwide acknowledged role of bees as major pollinators was the background for our course. Costa Rica was chosen as a course venue because of its tropical richness with many species of bees and related floral diversity. The long-time bee research cooperation between CINAT and Utrecht University, The Netherlands, was also important.

The program of two weeks consisted of lectures, demonstrations and three field visits, of which one was an overnight rainforest excursion. Through the excursions it was possible to visit different ecosystems and also to offer participants exposure to the general tropical nature.

During the whole course, alongside the program of lectures and practicals, students were working in teams of three on “Team Study Projects”. These concerned practical observations and experiments on bees and/or plants. The major program of lectures and demonstrations dealt with bee behavior and flower (pollination) biology. We extensively demonstrated the biology of “orchid bees”, “stingless bees” and relevant details of honeybee biology. We could further demonstrate local bumblebees and solitary bees and, of course, the keeping of Africanized Honeybees. All students were excited by the richness of this program and we are planning to repeat this course in Costa Rica in 2018.

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