Preface
This volume and its companion, Monocots: Comparative Biology and Evolution (excluding Poales) (Aliso Vol. 22, 2006), contain papers presented at the Third International Conference on the Comparative Biology of the Monocotyledons (“Monocots III”) and the Fourth International Symposium on Grass Systematics and Evolution (“Grasses IV”). Hosted by Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, Claremont, California, the conferences were held concurrently at the nearby Ontario Convention Center from March 31 through April 4, 2003. Some 305 researchers and students from 37 countries attended.


At Monocots III/Grasses IV, the goals of the scientific program were to: (1) Present and publish original research of high caliber. (2) Offer a strong core program in systematics while incorporating newer, relevant fields such as developmental biology and genomics, and to address the timely and challenging issue of data integration. (3) Assemble scientists and students, representing diverse fields, from around the world to interact, share ideas, and form collaborations. In a departure from past conferences, the Organizing Committee reserved sessions for contributed talks. We felt some prospective presenters who were not invited to participate in an organized session nor were organizing a session themselves would have original research of significant importance to report, perhaps involving taxa or processes not addressed in the organized sessions, and would prefer an oral presentation format.

Some 250 presentations were made in the form of talks or posters. Presenters in all 27 organized sessions were invited to submit papers for the proceedings volumes, along with presenters of selected contributed talks and posters. All manuscripts were reviewed by multiple referees.

At the closing session of the conference John R. and Charlotte G. Reeder were honored with an award acknowledging their many contributions to the systematics of grasses.

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Many others contributed to the success of the conference, including the participants; Anna Bell as chief organizer; staff, students, research associates, and volunteers at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden; session organizers; banquet speaker Bob Schmidt; session moderators; student projectionists; field trip leaders; Doug McCulloh and staff at Geographics; Karen Wilson; Linda Worlow; Ontario Convention Center; The Huntington Botanical Gardens; and the Claremont and Pasadena Chambers of Commerce.

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