

Biography

The outstanding contributions to acarology by Prof Gilberto J. de Moraes

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Gilberto José de Moraes was born on January 28th, 1953 in Santa Bárbara D'Oeste, São Paulo State, Brazil. He graduated as “Engenheiro Agrônomo” in 1975 from Escola Superior de Agricultura “Luiz de Queiroz” (ESALQ), University of São Paulo (USP), Piracicaba, São Paulo State, Brazil and began his career in the following year as researcher at The Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa). In 1976, he began his graduate research for his master’s degree in Entomology at the University of California, Riverside, United States, supervised by James McMurtry, in the area of biological control with predatory mites. He received the title of Master in 1978. From 1982 to 1985, he took the PhD Course in Entomology, again supervised by James McMurtry at the University of California, Riverside. During his PhD, he received an award in recognition of the significant contribution to research in biological control, in the student category.



In 1985, Prof. Moraes started his participation in an international project for the biological control of the green cassava mite, *Mononychellus tanajoa* (Tetranychidae), in cassava crops in Africa, in collaboration with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture. He was the coordinator of the project in Brazil and his activities corresponded to the discovery and selection of promising natural enemies of the pest in its region of origin, to be sent to Africa. Thanks to this project, the predatory mite *Typhlodromalus aripo* (Phytoseiidae) was detected in Brazil and subsequently released in several African countries. This predatory mite adapted very well in that region and is found in cassava crops to this day. The damage caused by *M. tanajoa* was significantly reduced, and generated savings of 2,157 million dollars by reducing losses in cassava production (Neuenschwander 2004), making it one of the most successful cases of classical biological control with mites.

In 1996, after working for about 20 years at Embrapa, Prof. Moraes moved to ESALQ/USP, in the then Department of Zoology, and currently the Department of Entomology and Acarology. As a professor and trainer of human resources, he has supervised 30 undergraduate students, 35 master's degree students, 30 Ph.D. students and 10 post-docs. His undergraduate and graduate students have conducted research in the areas of mite biodiversity, taxonomy, biological control and integrated management of important and economic acarine pests. Prof. Moraes coordinated, in dissertation and thesis works, the basic and applied research that led to the registration of the four species of predatory mites that are commercialized in Brazil by biological control companies. Throughout his professional life, he always had a key role in the training of new professors and researchers, associating the thesis and dissertation works of his advisees with projects in which he has participated in Brazil, other South American, African, Asian, and even European countries. He has been the advisor or co-advisor for students from Brazil, Argentina, Austria, Benin, Colombia, Egypt, Ecuador, France, Peru, Kenya, Dominican Republic, East Timor, Togo and Venezuela, many of whom are currently making contributions to the study of mites from different aspects and corners of the world. In training these professionals, he was responsible for guiding the first acarologists in some of these countries.

The curriculum records of Prof. Moraes are impressive in terms of the quantity and quality of its intellectual production accumulated in more than four decades of service to Science: there are more than 450 complete articles published in scientific journals (about 95% with mites), 15 books, and 20 book chapters. He has already described about 290 new species and nine new genera of mites, mainly Mesostigmata. Over 45 years serving as a professor and/or researcher, Prof. Moraes acted with leadership in scientific research and technological development, bringing invaluable contributions in his area of expertise, related to the taxonomy and biological control of agricultural pests with predatory mites. In the publication commemorating the 20th anniversary of “Zootaxa” (Zhang *et al.* 2021), Gilberto José de Moraes is highlighted as being one of the authors of the first paper (Moraes & Freire 2001) and the first monograph (catalog of species) published in the Acari section of the journal, the author who published the most in the Acari section with 94 papers on mites, and one of the authors of the second (Moraes *et al.* 2004—246 citations) and fifth (Mesa *et al.* 2009—120 citations) most cited papers in the Acari section of the journal.

Prof. Moraes has also been an editorial board member of leading Acarology journals such as Systematic and Applied Acarology, and International Journal of Acarology, for many years. Since 1999, he has participated regularly as an instructor in the biannual Agricultural Acarology course that was offered by the “Ohio State University”, in Columbus, and is currently offered at the “University of Arkansas”, in Bentoville, United States. One of the highlights of his career was the organization of the 13th International Congress of Acarology, held in 2010, for the first time in South America, where he served as President of the conference and did everything in his power to make the conference a success. While Prof. Moraes officially retired in 2018, he continues to supervise

Ph.D. students and publish, and is also Senior Lecturer in the Department of Entomology and Acarology, as well as in the Graduate Program in Entomology at ESALQ/USP.

Based on his productive career as a research scientist, his contribution to the education of students and researchers mainly from South America, but certainly from other parts of the world, and his commitment to Acarology as a discipline, we are honored to nominate **Prof. Gilberto José de Moraes** for the James McMurtry Award.

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