

# Chapter 1

## The Ecological and Applied Potential of *Baccharis*



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**Abstract** The genus *Baccharis* is composed of ca. 440 species, distributed primarily in South and Central America, many of which are of great ecological, economic, and cultural importance. *Baccharis* species are mostly dioecious and highly diverse in chemistry, ecology, architecture, and phenology, occupying many different niches and habitats across several gradients of light, temperature, humidity, altitude, and succession. Its species are found in natural, urban, and highly polluted environments. Many species host a large number of associated organisms, including the largest fauna of gall-inducing insects in the Neotropics, and play crucial roles in biodiversity maintenance as foundation species or ecosystem engineers, while others are invasive species with economic implications around the world. Many species are geographically restricted or endemic. *Baccharis* is also well known for being the source of innumerable chemical compounds widely used in folk medicine and in the cosmetics and pharmaceutical industries. It is one of the most studied genera in the world, owing to these multiple factors that have captured the attention of the scientific community.

**Keywords** Asteraceae · Bioeconomy · Ecosystem engineer · Foundation species · Nurse species · Plant-animal interactions

### 1 The Universe of *Baccharis*

The genus *Baccharis* is relatively large with ca. of 440 species so far described in the New World. Its distribution is broad, ranging from 55 degrees South (*Baccharis magellanica*: Isla Hornos, Chile: Lat  $-55.9416629$ , Lon  $-67.26916559$ ) to 43 degrees North (*Baccharis halimifolia*: Nova Scotia, Canada: Lat  $43.99676$ , Lon  $-65.869709$ ); therefore, with an estimated 11,187 km distance between the most extreme species populations. *Baccharis pilularis* has the northwestern-most

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distribution (Seattle, EUA: Lat 47.660917, Lon -122.42093). The species of *Baccharis* are found from sea level at both the Pacific and Atlantic oceans up to 5050 meters above sea level in the Andes. They inhabit forests, savanna, grassland, peat bogs, rocky outcrops, and desert ecosystems. They survive in mesic and xeric habitats, under saline conditions, in the shade and the sun, in extremely nutrient-impooverished environments, and even in polluted or contaminated areas. Many are early succession species (Westman et al. 1975), thriving in habitat conditions where nutrients and light are abundant. Some are rare and endemic to very specific habitats. *Baccharis* range from small herbaceous to treelet species and lianas, while some species are aphyllous. They are mostly dioecious and evergreen and provide the basis for the assembly of many animal communities and, in some cases, function as nurse species. The genus likely underwent true adaptive radiation in the New World, an aspect yet to be explored.

Several species of *Baccharis* are important whether for their beneficial or harmful effects (Palmer 1986; Boldt and Robbins 1987, 1990; Boldt 1989; Palmer and Haseler 1992a, b; Palmer and Tomley 1993; Palmer et al. 1993; Torres et al. 2000; Park et al. 2004; Oliveira et al. 2005; Abad and Bermejo 2007; Morales et al. 2008; Resende et al. 2012; Rabelo and Costa 2018; Cock and Hierro 2020; Schild et al. 2020). Beneficial effects include their use in controlling erosion, as ornamental plants or as a hedge (Thompson et al. 1995), and their medicinal properties (e.g., Budel et al. 2005; Verdi et al. 2005; Rabelo and Costa 2018). *Baccharis* species are important producers of hundreds of bioactive compounds used in several industries (e.g., fiber sensors coupled with an anti-theft alarm, food, chemical, cosmetics) or popularly used to treat many and different illnesses. The diversity of compounds produced by the species is probably a result of their wide range distribution in the most stressful conditions of the globe, which demands biochemical and physiological adaptations to survive. Furthermore, many species of this genus show a high cultural relevance. On the other hand, several species of *Baccharis* are considered invasive species of difficult management that occupy ruderal areas, pasturelands, and crops in Australia, the United States, and Europe (Sims-Chilton et al. 2010; Caño et al. 2016; Calleja et al. 2019). Other *Baccharis* species (e.g., *B. megapota-mica* and *B. coridifolia*) produce toxic compounds that can kill livestock (Habermehl et al. 1985; Jarvis et al. 1987, 1988, 1996; Rizzo et al. 1997; Rissi et al. 2005).

Although this book brings to light the most recent update on the scientific studies on the use and relevance of *Baccharis* in the wild, as sources of compounds with potential industrial or commercial application, or as a model system in science, the gaps in the knowledge of the genus are still enormous. For most species, basic knowledge is still lacking, such as information on life span, interactions with other organisms including pollinators and herbivores, population genetics, and propagation, among others. Only a few species (e.g., *B. halimifolia*, *B. trimera*, and *B. dracunculifolia*) have been studied in more detail (Gene et al. 1996; Caño et al. 2016; Fernandes et al. 2018; Rabelo and Costa 2018; Barbosa et al. 2017, 2019; Calleja et al. 2019; Monteiro et al. 2020; Rodrigues et al. 2020). There are few works on niche modeling developed for *Baccharis* (González et al. 2019).

While we have often argued that *Baccharis* is highly successful in habitat colonization due to its large seed production and long-distance dispersion, this has only been studied for very few species (e.g., *B. pilularis*, *B. halimifolia*, *B. dracunculifolia*). Most species are not that abundant in nature and inhabit harsh habitats in deserts and mountaintops. The ability to germinate under dark conditions, seed tolerance to shade, wide adaptability to soil nutrient conditions and salinity, survival under high soil humidity, and resprouting capabilities after fire (Westman et al. 1975; Gomes and Fernandes 2002) have also been listed as important causes of *Baccharis* success and widespread distribution. Boldt (1989) argue that these characteristics associated with high root growth capacity, intense sprouting after damage, high carbohydrate storage in the root system, and efficient water uptake and water use suggest several mechanisms responsible for the widespread occurrence and diversity of the genus. But these studies were mostly done for common species in North America, while most species are unknown beyond their taxonomy (e.g., Fernandes et al. 2007).

*Baccharis* represents a relatively large genus with wide distribution in the New World and presents high scientific and cultural relevance and huge economic potential, such as in producing important goods and services for human well-being. Among the countries that have published scientific literature about *Baccharis* species in the last 40 years are Brazil, United States, Argentina, Chile, Canada, and Mexico. More recently, even countries where the genus does not naturally occur, such as Spain, Japan, Lithuania, Denmark, and France, have produced articles on *Baccharis*.

## 2 The Ecological Path of *Baccharis*

*Baccharis* species are widely distributed from their origin, likely the mountaintop areas in eastern Brazil (Barroso 1976; Heiden et al. 2019). In the process of expansion and adaptation of *Baccharis* species, colonization by many species of insects and pathogens occurred, originating several types of associations. Some *Baccharis* species offer excellent resources for herbivorous and pollinating insects since they remain green and in bloom throughout the year (Boldt 1989; Espírito-Santo and Fernandes 1998; Espírito-Santo et al. 2004, 2007, 2012; Marques and Fernandes 2016; Watts et al. 2016; Fernandes et al. 2018; Moreira et al. 2018; Matilde-Silva et al. 2019; Monteiro et al. 2020). Some species bloom in autumn, which makes them very attractive to honey bees in a period when other flowers are absent. For example, *B. salicifolia*, *B. pilularis* and *B. sarothroides* are late summer and autumn honey plants (Boldt 1989). *Baccharis dracunculifolia* is a very important honey plant in Brazil and the main source of substances for the production of green propolis (Bastos and Oliveira 1999; Santos et al. 2011; Fernandes et al. 2018), while *B. concinna* produces flowers throughout the year (Madeira and Fernandes 1999; Espírito Santo and Fernandes 1998; Espírito Santo et al. 2012; Marques et al. 2002). These characteristics provide a unique scenario where problems of central relevance

in ecology and biodiversity can be studied in detail (see Fagundes et al. 2005; Silva et al. 2007) and across large biogeographical regions.

*Baccharis* species are, to a large extent, primary colonizers of disturbed habitats (eg, *B. dracunculifolia*, *B. concinna*, *B. pseudomyriocephala*, *B. halimifolia*, *B. pilularis*) and, thus, are very important for the recovery, functioning and maintenance of biodiversity in various ecosystems, including those under natural succession (Boldt 1989; Araújo et al. 2003). Due to their biological features, diverse associated fauna, and wide distribution – usually in high frequency and across gradients (altitudinal, hygrothermal, and of habitat disturbance) – the species of *Baccharis* have been extensively used as study models in ecological research; such as in monitoring the impacts of climate change. *Baccharis pilularis*, for instance, a major facilitating species in the chaparral of California (Pelaez et al. 2019), has been used as a model for studies of climate change due to its biological characteristics and ease of experimental manipulation (see Zavaleta 2006; Zavaleta and Kettlely 2006). In Brazil, several aspects of the species *B. dracunculifolia* have also been studied, including its invasiveness, environmental recovery capacity (see Julião et al. 2005; Fernandes et al. 2016; Adenesky-Filho et al. 2017), function as a nurse species (Perea et al. 2019) and experimental species for testing the effects of climate change (e.g., Sá et al. 2014; Oki et al. 2020).

Several species of *Baccharis* are, on the other hand, considered pests that are difficult to manage in pastures, growing in recreational areas. These invasions usually occur after changes in the environment and, due to their rapid growth, dense stands are formed (Boldt 1989). In central Chile, the formation of degraded vegetation resulted in optimal conditions for the establishment of hybrids and backcross progenies for some species of *Baccharis* (Faini et al. 1991). Some species interfere with the use of soil water and the maintenance of irrigation and drainage channels (Timmons 1959; Parker 1972; Ellis 2001; Caño et al. 2016; Fried et al. 2016). At least one species is invasive, *Baccharis halimifolia*, which was introduced in Australia (Bailey 1900), France, Spain (Dupont 1966) and Italy (Boldt 1989), being the only species occurring outside the Americas. On the other hand, recent studies point to other *Baccharis* invasions in Europe, such as that of *B. spicata*, and may represent a worrying threat (Verloove et al. 2018). In Brazil, pastures are completely unviable when the invasion by *B. dracunculifolia* is intense (Lorenzi 1992; Kissmann and Groth 1992; Altesor et al. 2005). However, it is a plant that colonizes degraded or abandoned areas and an abandoned pasture can be considered a degraded area compared to the natural environment.

Many studies have been carried out in the United States, Mexico, Brazil, and Australia to verify the richness and importance of insects on some native and introduced *Baccharis* species. In Australia, these studies focus on potential agents for the biological control of *B. halimifolia*, which has reached high population densities, replacing native vegetation (Palmer 1986; Boldt and Robbins 1987, 1990; Boldt 1989; Palmer and Haseler 1992a, b; Palmer et al. 1993; Palmer and Tomley 1993; Donders et al. 2005; Sims-Chilton et al. 2010; Green et al. 2012). This same species is becoming one of the most troublesome invaders in the European continent (Caño et al. 2013; Calleja et al. 2019). Among the organisms that cause damage to the host

plant, the most significant are Chrysomelidae, Curculionidae, Tephritidae, and Cecidomyiidae (Tilden 1953; Palmer 1986; Boldt 1989; Cordo et al. 1999; Oki et al. 2009; Fagundes and Fernandes 2011; Espirito-Santo et al. 2012; Fernandes et al. 2014; Monteiro et al. 2020). Chrysomelidae species consume large amounts of *Baccharis* spp. in South America (Blackwelder 1946), and the Brazilian species *Lioplacis elliptica* was introduced into Australia for biological control of *B. halimifolia* (Buzzi 1977; McFadyen 1978). Although only distributed in the North American Southwest, *B. pilularis* is another species that has been widely studied due to its importance as an invader of urban areas and water sources in the United States (Ellis 2001; Laris et al. 2017).

Gall-inducing insects can reach large population densities on some hosts and hence could be of importance in the biological control of *Baccharis* species (see reviews in Fernandes and Santos 2014). The potential for using the gall inducer *Baccharopelma dracunculifoliae* (Homoptera: Psyllidae) to control *B. dracunculifolia* where it represents potential problems due to its invasibility (e.g., Cochabamba, Bolivia) can be high due to its high frequency, impact, and wide distribution (Lara and Fernandes 1996; Espirito Santo and Fernandes 1998; Burkhardt et al. 2004; Araujo et al. 2006). Seed predator and borer insects are also of great relevance in studies of *Baccharis* biological control (Brailovsky 1982; Palmer 1986; McFadyen 1978) but have not been studied with the detail it deserves in recent years.

Thirty-three species of insects cause parasitic diseases on *Baccharis* in the United States (Cummings 1978). However, very little is known about the herbivorous insect fauna that attacks the hundreds of other native *Baccharis* species in the Americas, despite some timid advances made in recent years (e.g., Collevatti and Sperber 1997; Hudson and Stiling 1997; Espirito Santo and Fernandes 1998; Burkhardt et al. 2004; Carneiro et al. 2005, 2006, 2009a, b; Fagundes et al. 2005; Fagundes and Fernandes 2011; Neves et al. 2011; Oki et al. 2009; Espirito-Santo et al. 2012; Monteiro et al. 2020). Less well known are the most attacked species and circumstances or factors that influence the resistance and/or susceptibility to attack by natural enemies, although some initial progress has also been made (e.g., Espirito Santo et al. 2007, 2012).

### 3 *Baccharis* Interactions and Community Structuring

In the wilderness, *Baccharis* plays a key role in creating opportunities for community assembly and maintenance. A few other genera or species have been reported to be superhosts of gall-inducing insects in the Nearctic and Palearctic regions: *Quercus* (Felt 1940; Abrahamson et al. 1998; Manos et al. 1999; Maldonado-Lopez et al. 2016; Pérez-Lopez et al. 2016), *Larrea tridentata* (Waring and Price 1990), *Salix* (Price et al. 1995), *Populus* (Floate and Whitham 1995), *Rosa* (Shorthouse and Rohfritsch 1992; Stone et al. 2002), *Chrysothamnus* in southwestern North America (Fernandes et al. 2000), and *Solidago* (Abrahamson and Weis 1997). These widely colonized host species have served as laboratories to test for generalities of

ecological interactions (see Fernandes and Barbosa 2014). In the Neotropics and southern temperate region, some host plant genera have the same role, such as *Copaifera* (Leguminosae) (Costa et al. 2010, 2011), *Nothofagus* (Quintero et al. 2014), *Protium* (Maia 2011; Julião et al. 2014), and *Baccharis* (Fernandes et al. 1996; Fernandes and Barbosa 2014; Formiga et al. 2015; Barbosa et al. 2017, 2019). In the reviews by Fernandes et al. (1996) and Fernandes and Barbosa (2014), the *Baccharis* hosts that supported the highest numbers of galling insects were *B. dracunculifolia* (17 spp.), *B. concinna* (15 spp.), *B. salicifolia* (13 spp.), and *Baccharis* sp. 1 (11 spp.). In the southeastern mountains of Brazil, the Mantiqueira and Espinhaço Mountains, Coelho et al. (2018) reported 106 galling species on 17 *Baccharis* species. The highest richness of galling insects (13 galling species) was recorded on *B. dracunculifolia*, confirming the previous literature surveys for the species. The study also recorded a high richness of galling insects on *B. minutiflora* (12 spp.), *B. cognata* (10 spp.), *B. reticularia* (9 spp.), *B. intermixta* (8 spp.), and *B. concinna* (7 spp.). The hosts *B. ramosissima*, *B. helychrysoides*, and *B. truncata* supported six galling species each, while *B. serrulata*, *B. ligustrina*, and *B. glutinosa* each had three galling species recorded. A remarkable feature of *Baccharis* is that its galling organisms are from many different orders; e.g., Diptera, Lepidoptera, and Hemiptera. Based on a Web of Science search with the words “insect galls, galls, cecidia, galling insects, galhas, gallmucken, and agallas,” we were able to record at least 47 studies on galling insects on 8 species of *Baccharis* in the last 75 years (1945–2020).

While no one has yet listed the number of insects attracted to the flowers of *Baccharis* (but see Ferracini et al. 1995), our own experience indicates it is large. In a short observation on the number of insects attracted to the flowers of *Baccharis dracunculifolia* during a very limited number of days (2–3 days), we have been able to list more than 30 different species (in review). These data confirm that some *Baccharis* species are extremely important in providing resources to pollinators. They also confirm that this species' effects on ecosystem functioning must be even higher where these plants are abundant or are key strategic resources for the community, such in mountaintop regions and deserts (e.g., Boldt 1989; Griffin 1997). Hence, *Baccharis* species could be used in programs to attract pollinators.

On the other hand, the understanding of some ecological and evolutionary paths in *Baccharis* is incipient. For instance, genetic studies are in their infancy, and more applied aspects such as propagation for several uses are not well developed. Genetic studies could be of great relevance in promoting other sorts of ecological and evolutionary studies in the future.

## 4 The Chemistry of *Baccharis*

*Baccharis* species are known in traditional culture for the treatment of diseases such as gastrointestinal and liver disorders, anemia, diabetes, diarrhea, infections, cancer, gout, rheumatism, ulcers, and skin problems, among others (Vidari et al. 2003; Abad and Bermejo 2007; Hocayen et al. 2016; Rabelo and Costa 2018;

Romero-Benavides et al. 2018; Ascari et al. 2019; Basso et al. 2019; Costa et al. 2019; Bonin et al. 2020; Paniagua-Zambrana et al. 2020; Souza et al. 2020). Several studies present the most updated information on the production of phytochemicals for pharmaceutical, cosmetic, and other applications, and therefore we will not review these here (Verdi et al. 2005; Grecco et al. 2010; Galvão et al. 2012; Vannini et al. 2012; González et al. 2018; Jaramillo-García et al. 2018; Ueno et al. 2018).

This high usage in folk medicine and interest by the pharmaceutical industry has its origin in the rich chemical properties of the genus. Several species of *Baccharis* produce chemical compounds that are under investigation by many institutes and laboratories around the world (e.g., Jarvis et al. 1988; Brown 1994; Fournet et al. 1994; Verdi et al. 2005; Pereira et al. 2017; Romero-Benavides et al. 2018; Bonin et al. 2020). In folk medicine, tea made from *B. douglasii* is used to treat ulcerations and wounds. Other teas are used to treat headaches and as emetics (Boldt 1989). *B. trimera* ethyl acetate extracts have been used against *Schistosoma* infections in Brazil (Herz et al. 1977). In Argentina, about 50 species of *Baccharis* are used in folk medicine (Boldt 1989). Bandoni et al. (1978) found that two flavonoids extracted from *B. crispa* and *B. notoserghila* have antimicrobial activity, but since then this number of studies has continued to grow, showing the relevance of this genus.

Various chemical compounds in *Baccharis* are potentially effective in fighting cancer. Baccharin trichothecene extracted from the leaves, buds, and dried flowers of *B. megapotamica* acts against leukemia and tumors of the colon of mice (Kupchan et al. 1976, 1977; Arcamone et al. 1980; Carvalho et al. 2016; Rodrigues et al. 2020). Two additional groups of trichothecenes, roridins, and verrucarins, found in *B. coridifolia*, are active against nasopharyngeal tumor cells (Jarvis et al. 1988, see also Budel et al. 2005; Verdi et al. 2005). About 180 species have already been analyzed chemically, leaving about 260 species to be prospected for their chemical constituents and efficacy. On the other hand, the potential for discovering new chemicals is greatly expanded when long-term studies are carried out. Collections of botanical material for phytochemical studies are generally gathered in a single opportunity, thus losing the enormous variability and seasonality of the production of compounds (Gershenzon 1984). Hence, the genus has an enormous potential to contribute a large number of chemical substances, some of which might be new to science.

According to Abad and Bermejo (2007), over 150 compounds have been isolated and identified from the *Baccharis* genus. Many substances isolated from this genus have been used as medicine (e.g., *B. trinervis*, used as anti-HIV), perfumes (essential oils of *B. dracunculifolia*, *B. uncinella*, *B. genistelloides*, *B. trimera*), and repellents (terpenoids and flavonoids found in many species), among other products (Jarvis et al. 1988; Argandoña and Faini 1993; Ferracini et al. 1995; Palomino et al. 2002; Agostini et al. 2005; Verdi et al. 2005; Wollenweber et al. 2006). The *Baccharis* species more deeply studied chemically are *B. megapotamica*, *B. incarum*, *B. trimera*, *B. trinervis*, *B. salicifolia*, *B. crispa*, *B. coridifolia*, *B. dracunculifolia*, *B. uncinella*, *B. retusa*, *B. linearis*, *B. grisebachii*, *B. obtusifolia*, and *B. tricuneata* (Bohlmann et al. 1982; Verdi et al. 2005; Budel et al. 2005; Besten et al. 2012;

Campos et al. 2016; Moraes Neto et al. 2019). This arsenal of applicability has led to the filing of 226 *Baccharis* patents. Half of these patents are aimed at the pharmacological area (53.5% of patents), mainly in the treatment of cancer (40 patents). Among the patents, another highlight is the application of *B. gaudichaudiana* in the treatment of coronavirus (Junxing et al. 2003). This information emphasizes the pharmacological potentialities around this genus. In southeastern Brazil, oils extracted from leaves and stems of *B. dracunculifolia* and *B. genistelloides* are used as fragrances (Chialva and Doglia 1990; Suttisri et al. 1994; Fabiane et al. 2008; Frizzo et al. 2001, 2008; Queiroga et al. 1990, 2014), but the potential for new findings is enormous as most of the species were not yet screened for the production of them.

## 5 Other Applications

Despite their low nutritional content and known unpalatability (Pelaez et al. 2019; Cock and Hierro 2020), some species of *Baccharis*, considered to be non-toxic, have been used as fodder for cattle (Benson and Darrow 1981). *B. sarothroides* has been used as vegetation cover and to correct soils degraded by copper mining in Arizona, USA (Day and Ludeke 1980; Norem et al. 1982; Haque et al. 2008; Haque et al. 2009). In Brazil, mainly in Minas Gerais, where mineral exploration is carried out in the open, studies on the use of plants of this genus for the recovery of degraded areas were initiated, and the species *B. dracunculifolia* and *B. concinna* are suggested as viable alternatives to the introduction of exotic species to habitat and region (e.g., Fernandes et al. 2007; Negreiros et al. 2014; Gomes et al. 2015; Fernandes et al. 2016).

A serious problem is cattle poisoning by *Baccharis*. Animal death cases have been recorded in Brazil (Occhioni 1944; Tokarnia and Dobereiner 1976), Uruguay, and Argentina (Schang 1929). The vegetative parts are toxic throughout the year, while the flowers are 4–8 times more toxic (Tokarnia and Dobereiner 1976). The most common toxic compounds found in some *Baccharis* species studied were macrocyclic trichothecenes (Kupchan et al. 1976, 1977; Habermehl et al. 1985; Jarvis et al. 1988, 1996; Rizzo et al. 1997; Driemeier et al. 2000; Varaschin and Alessi 2003). The symptoms exhibited by the poisoned cattle are anorexia, lack of coordination and direction in walking, tremors, and convulsions. Postmortem analyses reveal lesions in the rumen, necrosis, and detachment of the intestinal mucosa (Tokarnia and Dobereiner 1976; see also Jarvis et al. 1996; Driemeier et al. 2000; Budel et al. 2005; Verdi et al. 2005; Oliveira-Filho et al. 2011; Panziera et al. 2015).

An important applied aspect is that of *B. dracunculifolia* and Africanized honey bee *Apis mellifera* (Kumazawa et al. 2003). This bee collects resins from apical buds of *B. dracunculifolia* and uses it to produce a resinous layer inside the hive, known as green propolis (Teixeira et al. 2005; Fernandes et al. 2018). This resinous mass has antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, anticancer, and healing properties and thus has been widely studied, commercialized, and used, primarily by the



pharmaceutical and cosmetics industry (Banskota et al. 2001; Chan et al. 2012; Veiga et al. 2017; Endo et al. 2018). Among the chemicals isolated from propolis, it is worth mentioning the presence of flavonoids, phenylpropanoids, phenolic acids, and essential oils (Kumazawa et al. 2003; Teixeira et al. 2005; Takashima et al. 2019).

Another application of *Baccharis* is associated with its high diversity of symbiotic organisms (bacteria, endophytic fungi, and mycorrhizae), which not only helps in plant survival and development but generates a potential for use in the field of bioprospecting (Oki et al. 2009, 2016; Cuzzi et al. 2012; Vieira et al. 2014; Coutinho et al. 2019). *Baccharis* endophytic fungi have been shown to be effective in antimicrobial and antifungal (Oki et al. 2016; Vieira et al. 2014), as well as anti-herbivory, activities (Oki et al. 2016, 2021).

## 6 The Content of the Book

This book is arranged into four main parts. Chapter 1 focuses on the main ecological and evolutionary aspects of the genus. Chapter 2 presents the most current understanding of the taxonomy and distribution of the 442 species of *Baccharis*, discussing the genus origins and diversification. Chapter 3 offers a historical overview of genetic studies on *Baccharis* species, including recent method developments. Chapter 4 addresses the relationship between intersexual differences in resource allocation and herbivory in dioecious *Baccharis* species. Chapter 5 provides a detailed description of the network of direct and indirect interactions among arthropods in the well-studied *B. dracunculifolia* system. Chapter 6 brings to light the world of endophytic fungi associated with *Baccharis* and their importance in helping plants cope with environmental stresses and natural enemies and as a source of bioactive compounds. Chapter 7 reveals the crucial role of *Baccharis* species as nurse plants and in community assembly, particularly in stressful and herbivore-dominated environments in the Americas. Then, Chap. 8 closes the section discussing the causes and consequences of biological invasion by *Baccharis* in the world.

The second part concentrates on the structural and chemical particularities of the *Baccharis* species. Chapter 9 provides a comprehensive review of the morphology and anatomy of *Baccharis*, including morphological and anatomical features of particular taxonomic relevance. Chapter 10 reviews the chemical composition of essential oils of *Baccharis* species and their wide range of biological activities. Chapter 11 shows a comprehensive overview of the wide variety of flavonoids present in *Baccharis* species. Chapter 12 presents ethnopharmacological uses of phenolic compounds, focusing on folk medicine, and it also discusses the toxicity of some *Baccharis* species. The main volatile terpenes, which play key roles in the biological activities of *Baccharis* species, are presented in Chap. 13. Trichothecenes are covered in detail in Chap. 14, while in Chap. 15 livestock poisoning by some species of *Baccharis* is reviewed.

Part three explores the social and economic importance of *Baccharis*. Chapter 16 reviews the wide variety of popular uses of several species of *Baccharis* in South

America. Chapter 17 describes the development of the cultivar of *B. trimera*, the first Brazilian medicinal plant to be registered and patent-protected. Chapter 18 exposes the potential of *Baccharis* secondary metabolites in the development of new drugs to fight cancer. The last chapter in this part, Chap. 19, portrays the current status of scientific and technological innovations involving species of *Baccharis*.

This book's final part is devoted to green propolis, whose chief plant source is *B. dracunculifolia*. Chapter 20 reviews the chemical constituents and antioxidant properties of Brazilian green propolis. Chapter 21 examines the potential of green propolis components in the prevention and treatment of obesity and diabetes. Chapter 22 discusses the effects of the green propolis on the immune response. Finally, Chap. 23 presents the current status of innovation and markets of propolis, emphasizing green propolis.

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