

Remembrance of Jerzy Rzedowski

Remembranzas de Jerzy Rzedowski

Dr. Christiane Anderson¹

It was with great sadness that I learned of the death of the renowned Mexican botanist Jerzy Rzedowski. He was a mentor and friend to my late husband, William R. Anderson, and to me, beginning in our graduate student days at the University of Michigan and well into our careers. Our major professor, Rogers McVaugh, focussed his research on the Mexican flora. In collaboration with Dr. Rzedowski he initiated in the 1950's a floristic study of western Mexico in the region designated "Nueva Galicia," the name of a Spanish viceroyalty that approximates a floristic province. A detailed overview is provided in "La vegetación de Nueva Galicia" by J. Rzedowski and R. McVaugh (*Contributions from the University of Michigan Herbarium*, volume 9(1): 1-123, 1966).

My acquaintance with Dr. Rzedowski began when he would visit for several months at the University of Michigan Herbarium during the 1960's. I was a beginning student, but Bill had already met him in Mexico during trips with Dr. McVaugh. We always remembered Dr. Rzedowski and his wife Graciela for their hospitality and graciousness during our time in Mexico. Beginning with field trips to Mexico in our student years, we greatly benefited from Dr. Rzedowski's insights and his generosity, especially when he would join us for intervals. An example is the time I was searching for a rare species in the

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genus *Trixis* (Compositae). The few specimens I had seen were obtained by the American collector C. G. Pringle in 1906 in the “Iguala Canyon” of Guerrero. Dr. Rzedowski explained to us that Pringle had followed the railroad through the Cañón de la Mano Negra. It was the dry season, and Dr. Rzedowski led us for a day of collecting along the riverbed adjacent to the narrow railroad tracks that run through the steep canyon – and suddenly there above our heads was *Trixis calcicola* clinging to the limestone cliffs.

Throughout the years Bill and I were among the legion of American botanists who revered Dr. Rzedowski for his prodigious productivity, his seemingly inexhaustible knowledge of the Mexican flora, and his botanical scholarship. He was also admired as a gifted teacher and a resourceful administrator, and as well as the founder and editor of “*Acta Botanica Mexicana*” and “*Flora del Bajío*.” It was my privilege to nominate him with immense support for the Asa Gray Award for 1995, given by the American Society of Plant Taxonomists (*Systematic Botany*, volume 21: 1–2. 1996). This honor added to the many awards bestowed on Dr. Rzedowski throughout his lifetime. Jerzy Rzedowski will be remembered as a great Mexican botanist and cherished for his warmth, kindness, generosity, and gentle sense of humor.

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