



**Acta Botanica
Mexicana**

Emily Jane Lott
(1947-2025)



Emily Jane Lott at Cerro Tláloc, Estado de México, 1980 (photographer unknown).

A Colleague to Many and a Friend to All

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Received: August 10, 2025.

Reviewed: August 13, 2025.

Accepted by Marie-Stéphanie Samain: August 14, 2025.

Published Online first: August 18, 2025.

Published: Acta Botanica Mexicana 132(2025).

To cite as: Thomas F., D. 2025. Emily Jane Lott (1947-2025). Acta Botanica Mexicana 132: e2502. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21829/abm132.2025.2502>



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e-ISSN: 2448-7589

Emily Jane Lott passed away at the age of 77 on 15 May 2025 in Austin, Texas, after a long battle with metastatic breast cancer. Emily was born in Navasota, Texas, where she spent her childhood. She graduated from Texas Christian University (Fort Worth, Texas) in 1969 with a B.A. in English. Subsequently, she obtained an M.A. degree in Literature (1972) and a Masters in Library Science (1976) from the University of Texas at Austin. While in Austin, she worked at the University's Rare Plant Study Center, as a librarian in the herbarium (TEX/LL), and as a Biology Field Worker for Texas State Parks (assisting with inventory and documentation of rare plants in the state parks). She also began her fieldwork in Mexico on several collecting trips to Coahuila with Tom Wendt and David Riskind. Subsequently, she went to Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas for a M.S. in Biology (1979). In 1979, she and her first husband, Tom Wendt, moved to Mexico, where Emily held the position of Técnico Académico at the Instituto de Biología, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (1981-1986). In addition to her duties in the herbarium, Emily spent considerable time studying the flora and tropical dry forest vegetation at UNAM's Estación de Biología Chamela on the Pacific Coast of Jalisco. There, she collected widely (Fig. 1)

and published numerous new taxa, as well as a catalogue of the station's vascular plants; she also co-authored several important publications on ecological aspects of tropical dry forest.

Emily married Tom Atkinson, an entomologist specializing in bark beetles, in 1985, and their son, William Atkinson, was born in 1986. The family moved to Gainesville, Florida in 1987, and to Riverside, California in 1990. While in Riverside, Emily became affiliated with the herbarium at the University of California, Riverside (UCR). There, she assisted in the herbarium, identified plants, and participated in fieldwork at Rancho Cuixmala in Jalisco and Rancho El Jabalí in Colima (both now in protected areas). In 1994, the family moved to Texas, first to Coppel (near Dallas) for a few years, and then to Austin. In 2001, Emily and Tom built their dream home ("The Dragonfly House" or "Casa Libélula") on a bluff overlooking the Colorado River on the east side of town. Emily became affiliated with the herbarium (TEX/LL) of the Billie L. Turner Plant Resources Center at the University of Texas, made botanical excursions to western Texas (e.g., the Chinati Mountains), and continued her studies of and publications on Mexican plants. Between 2004 and 2010, she was also affiliated with the Sociedad

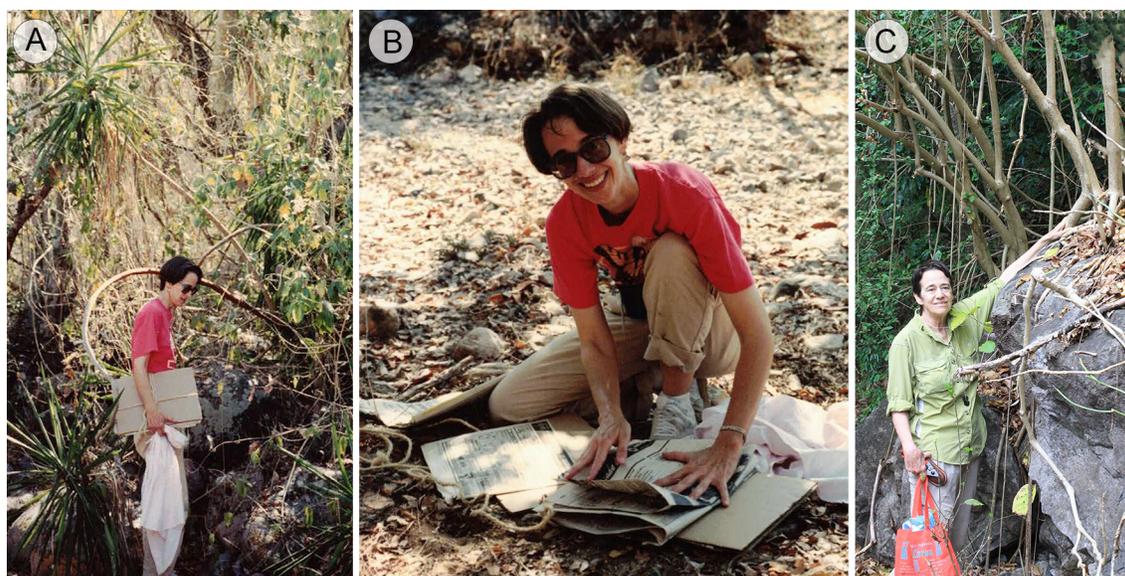


Figure 1: Emily Lott. A. collecting plants at Chamela, Jalisco (photo by T. Atkinson, 1990); B. pressing plants at Chamela (photo by T. Atkinson, 1990); C. pointing out a new, epipetric species, *Louteridium dendropilosum* T.F. Daniel, in the Sierra Sur de Oaxaca (photo by T. Daniel, 2012).

para el Estudio de los Recursos Bióticos de Oaxaca (SERBO). On numerous trips to Oaxaca, she worked at their herbarium in Cd. Oaxaca (SERO) identifying collections, explored regions of tropical dry forests, and collected plants in the Sierra Sur of that state.

Emily's major contributions to botany consist of her plant collections from Texas and Mexico; 38 publications dealing with taxonomic novelties/renovations, floristics, and studies on the vegetation of tropical dry forests (Appendix 1); and her identifications of numerous problematic specimens in many North American herbaria. Her collections were widely distributed among herbaria, with major deposits at CAS, MEXU, MO, TEX, and UCR. Her botanical interests were broad. Emily's taxonomic publications deal with 10 families, with an emphasis on Acanthaceae and Euphorbiaceae. She described 17 new taxa (Appendix 2), including two new genera (*Gypsacanthus* E.J. Lott, V. Jamar. & Rzed. and *Dieterlea* E.J. Lott). Her floristic accounts of the Chamela-Cuixmala region of southwestern Jalisco helped to reveal the botanical diversity and biological importance of that region, and undoubtedly were important in justifying its current protected status. Her studies on tropical dry forests helped to gain a better understanding of ecological aspects of that critical and extensive biotic community in western Mexico. In recognition of the importance of Emily's collections, scientific publications, and contributions to the

Mexican botanical community, she was awarded the Medalla al Mérito Botánico by the Sociedad Botánica de México in 2013. Fittingly, 13 species (Appendix 3) have been named in her honor to date.

Wherever Emily was located, she was active botanically, whether on a professional basis, volunteering at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, or growing plants at her home. Her broad knowledge (especially of the tropical dry forest flora of western Mexico) and keen eye for unusual plants were appreciated by all who accompanied her in the field. Friends and colleagues especially liked visiting or working with Emily because of her kindness, generosity, patience, and good-humor. In addition to its plant life, she was a true aficionada of Mexico—its landscapes, culture, and inhabitants. Emily also delighted in the varied and often exotic regional cuisines of Mexico and was an excellent cook. She was devoted to her family, friends, and pet dogs. So many folks were so lucky to be welcomed by Emily and Tom to their beautiful and unique Dragonfly House. Emily is deeply missed by all those friends and botanists who had the good fortune to cross her path.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful for the recollections and suggestions of Tom Atkinson, David Riskind, and Tom Wendt.

Appendix 1: Scientific publications of Emily Lott, in alphabetical order.

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- Lott, E. J. 1984. A new species of *Jatropha* (Euphorbiaceae) from coastal Jalisco, Mexico. *Madroño* 31(3): 180-184.
- Lott, E. J. 1985a. New combinations in Chihuahuan Desert *Aquilegia* (Ranunculaceae). *Phytologia* 58(7): 488.
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Appendix 2: New taxa described by Emily Lott.

Aechmea tuitensis Magana & E.J. Lott
Bourreria rubra E.J. Lott & J.S. Mill.
Croton chamelensis E.J. Lott
Croton pascualii E.J. Lott & Mart. Gord.
Dieterlea E.J. Lott
Dieterlea fusiformis E.J. Lott
Gypsacanthus E.J. Lott, V. Jaram. & Rzed.
Gypsacanthus nelsonii E.J. Lott, V. Jaram. & Rzed.
Jatropha bullockii E.J. Lott
Jatropha martinezii E.J. Lott & Dehgan
Justicia cuixmalensis T.F. Daniel & E.J. Lott
Justicia salasiae T.F. Daniel & E.J. Lott
Lycium arochae F. Chiang, T. Wendt & E.J. Lott
Manfreda chamelensis E.J. Lott & Verh.-Will.
Matelea magallanesii E.J. Lott
Recchia simplicifolia T. Wendt & E.J. Lott
Sicyos motozintlensis E.J. Lott & Fryxell



Appendix 3: Plants named in honor of Emily Lott.

- Argythamnia lottiae* J. Ingram (1984)
Aristolochia emiliae Santana Mich. & Solís (2008)
Bouvardia lottiae Borhidi (2004)
Chileroanthemum lottiae T.F. Daniel (1993)
Euphorbia lottiae V.W. Steinm. (2005)
Helietta lottiae F. Chiang (1984)
Ipomoea lottiae J.A. McDonald (1987)
Malpighia emiliae W.R. Anderson (1987)
Schaefferia lottiae Lundell (1983)
Sebastiania lottiae McVaugh (1995)
Spiranthes emiliae M.C. Johnst. (1981)
Tetramerium emilyanum T.F. Daniel (1986)
Verbesina lottiana B.L. Turner & J.L. Olsen (1988)

