

## General information for visitors of the Tropical Station La Gamba



Dear visitors,

We are pleased to welcome you at the Tropical Station La Gamba. We ask you to read this document in detail to facilitate a pleasant stay. With your signature you declare that you adhere to all rules as described below.

- The Tropical Station La Gamba is directly adjacent to a rainforest (National Park Piedras Blancas). This vicinity to a natural tropical ecosystem is associated with risks which are sometimes difficult to assess and predict. Encounters with animals can happen unexpectedly. Some of these animals (scorpions, spiders and snakes) can have a powerful venom. Snakes can regularly be found on tracks, and scorpions can be in your boots! We ask you to watch your steps and stay on trails both during day- and night-time, and to use a torch after dusk.
- It is important to acknowledge that all land surrounding the station is either private property or part of the National Park Piedras Blancas. It is essential to inform the staff of the Esquinas Rainforest Lodge before entering their property. Scientific research on the property of the hotel and other private land needs to be approved by the owners. In case such a permission by owners is required, please consult the station staff who will help you in this matter.
- Wertsachen und persönliche Gegenstände bitte immer im Safe, welche sich in jedem Zimmer befinden, aufbewahren. Die Tropenstation La Gamba ist nicht für Verlust verantwortlich.
- Valuables and personal belongings need to be stored in the safes in the rooms. The Tropical Station La Gamba is not liable for any losses.
- Even if it appears as a tropical fairy tale: coconuts are heavy and fall down from significant heights! The trails in the station are laid out to avoid coconut palms. Please be cautious of falling branches and coconuts during rain and winds. Globally more people die from falling coconuts than from snakebites! We advise you to avoid the forest during strong rains and winds. Trees can become unrooted, and branches can fall down.
- We ask you to always inform a member of the station staff about your destinations and whereabouts around the station. Please be aware that the Tropical Station La Gamba is not liable for any accidents.
- In Costa Rica it is not allowed to conduct scientific research without a permission from the local authorities (MINAET-SINAC). It is essential to obtain such a permission in advance. Without a research permit it is not allowed to conduct any research at the Tropical Station La Gamba!
- The laboratory provides books, computers and basic lab equipment. Books can only be used in the laboratory, and can not be borrowed. The laboratory rules (see Appendix) strictly need to be adhered to.
- The use of computers, scientific equipment etc. is only possible after consultation with the station staff. We ask you to use the station-owned equipment with care. Any damage through careless use is at your responsibility (see also "Laboratory Safety Rules")
- The same applies to the use of bicycles (their use is free of charge). Damage to the bicycles needs to be reported to the station staff.
- When the laboratory is empty it needs to be locked to avoid thefts. The key is stored at a location known by the station staff.
- After 10.00 pm a curfew applies to the entire station area. For longer evenings we ask you to visit the bar in La Gamba. Please be quiet on your return!

- Smoking at the station is only possible at the designated area close to the entrance gate.
- Chemicals and scientific equipment: the storage and leaving of consumables and equipment imported into the station needs to be discussed with the station staff during the stay and prior to departure. The disposal of brought chemicals can be associated with costs!
- Prior to departure, all masking tape marks and other remnants of scientific work need to be removed from the forest. The laboratory benches need to be left clean.

**Tropical Research Station La Gamba  
University of Vienna**

# **Laboratory safety instructions**

Researchers, students, trainees and staff of the tropical station are self-responsible for safety and cleanliness in the laboratory.

The University of Vienna makes available basic laboratory equipment, including a water purification system, electronic balances, a centrifuge, a spectrophotometer, drying ovens, a horizontal shaker and various other instruments e.g. a pH meter, a conductivity meter, an oxygen meter, Vortexes, and pipettes etc. The use of these instruments and of the laboratory in general is at one's own risk. Users are liable for any damages that come from improper handling of instruments or carelessness in the laboratory.

Consumables and chemicals have to be provided by the laboratory user. Additionally, toxic wastes and in particular chemicals have to be disposed of properly by the laboratory user or be taken back to the country of origin for disposal.

The following rules have to be followed strictly in the laboratory:

1. Eating, drinking and smoking are strictly forbidden in the laboratory.
2. Do not use open fire or flames in the laboratory.
3. For safety reasons and for coming to a user's aid in case of accidents it is forbidden to work alone in the laboratory if toxic, corrosive or flammable chemicals are used. Moreover, the unattended or unassisted use of instruments that pose a health risk is forbidden.
4. The handling of chemicals may put your health at risk!

- + To indicate the different dangers posed by chemicals the following symbols are used:  
Skull (highly toxic or toxic); Andreas cross (slightly toxic or irritating); dripping reaction vials (corrosive); explosion (danger of explosion); Flaming ring (oxidative, fire hazard); flame (highly inflammable or inflammable).



- + All laboratory users have to inform themselves on the potential risks posed by chemicals, instruments and procedures before starting their work. This includes danger symbols, risk information and safety instructions given on the original chemical packages.
- + Protective gloves or latex/nitrile gloves have to be used alongside with a lab coat when handling toxic, corrosive or other potentially dangerous chemicals. After each use the gloves have to be disposed of and hand washed carefully with soap.

## + **Laboratory safety instructions**

- + The use of protective glasses is mandatory when working with corrosive or toxic chemicals or with organic solvents. In case of an accident a first aid kit is located in the main building and eye wash bottles in the laboratory above the sink.
  - + Handling of toxic chemicals is restricted to the respective plastic trays/containments.
  - + Chemicals are to be stored strictly in the respective locked cabinet. The use and storage of highly inflammable chemicals (point of inflammation below 0°C) is strictly forbidden.
  - + NO chemicals or solutions thereof are to be disposed of in the sink of the laboratory since the research station does not have a waste treatment system capable for chemical wastes. Liquid chemical wastes have to be collected separately in four categories: mineral acids, organic solvents, heavy metals and special chemical wastes (if required; e.g. toxic organic wastes). Solid chemical wastes have to be collected strictly separately. All wastes have to be stored in suitable glass bottles (acids, solvents etc) or plastic bottles (solid wastes), preferably in used but original chemical containers, and labelled with its content, concentration, name of producer and date. The disposing of chemicals in Costa Rica is general very difficult and especially problematical in case of insufficient labelled waste.
  - + Aliquots of chemicals and solutions have to be stored in adequate bottles (not in measuring bulbs or glasses!), carrying a label indicating the nature and concentration of the chemical, date and name of producer. If greater aliquots of chemicals are filled in bottles the correct symbols for health risk have to be applied.
  - + It is strictly forbidden to store chemicals or solutions in bottles or packages that can be confused with food containments or drinking bottles!
5. Work benches and instruments (e.g. electronic balances and centrifuges) have to be kept scrupulously clean! Therefore, after end of an experiment or at the end of a working day the lab benches have to be wiped with a clean wet cloth or with moist paper towels. Instruments have to be cleaned adequately and carefully according to the manufacturers instructions (e.g. moist paper towel or a soft brush; do not use detergents). Glass and plastic ware has to be cleaned/ washed in the sink, rinsed with deionised water thereafter, dried and put in the respective cupboards.
  6. All scientific instruments are property of the University of Vienna and their use is allowed only after proper instruction by the staff of the Research Station La Gamba. If instrument malfunctions occur or calibrations or maintenance of instruments is necessary, the station management has to be informed immediately and an email containing the relevant information is to be sent to: [checo@univie.ac.at](mailto:checo@univie.ac.at)
  7. Accidents have to be reported immediately to the station management that is responsible for first aid and organisation of further medical care.

# Tropical Station La Gamba



I confirm that I have read the instruction leaflet, and that I adhere to all rules. I also adhere to all safety regulations, and will follow all instructions by the station staff.

I am above 18 years old, and am responsible for all accompanying under-aged persons under my liability.

Name:

---

Signature, Date

Name:

---

Signature, Date

Name:

---

Signature, Date

Name:

---

Signature, Date

Name:

---

Signature, Date

Name:

---

Signature, Date