

Salvador Rivas-Martínez

addressed by Javier Loidi, Bilbao

Salvador Rivas-Martínez was born in 1935, in Madrid, into a botanist's family: his father, Rivas Goday and his grandfather, Rivas Mateos, were prominent botanists in their time. Under his father's leadership, he made contact with the most important European vegetation scientists of the post-war period, during the 1950s and 1960s, particularly Braun-Blanquet and Tüxen. Other important scientists of that period who also were in contact with Rivas-Martínez were Pinto da Silva and Font Quer and Bolòs. As a researcher, Rivas-Martínez began by studying the vegetation of central and western Spain; his Ph.D. work on the Guadarrama Range is one example of this. From the 1970s onward, he extended his interest to the whole Iberian Peninsula and later to the western Mediterranean area.

From the mid-seventies onwards Salvador played an important role in developing the concept of vegetation complexes, called sigma-associations. Another milestone in his work is his intensive study of bioclimatology and biogeography on the basis of vegetation patterns, first in the Iberian Peninsula and later all over the world. In more recent times, since the early 1990s, he has led the vast inventory of the habitat types in Spain, and now he is finishing an overall check-list of the vascular plant communities for Spain and Portugal.

Salvador Rivas-Martínez has been an IAVS member since the early times and has participated in many ways in the activities of the organization. He has been a frequent participant in the annual symposia, has been a member of the IAVS Council, and has helped with the organization of two IAVS symposia: Tenerife in 1993 and Bilbao in 1999. In those years he was co-leader of the IAVS excursions, which took place in Tenerife and peninsular Spain and Portugal, respectively.