

TROPILUNCH

A Student Journey through Colombia's Chocó Biogeográfico: Biodiversity, Ethnobiology, and Community **

**Artis Trice, Daniela Gonzalez ,
Juan Restrepo, Dr. Pilar Useche**



BIO

Artis Trice is a first-year PhD student in the Department of Anthropology studying ethnobotany, medicinal teas, and perceptions of health among the Jamaican diaspora in Florida and Georgia.

Daniela Gonzalez is a student in the Master of Sustainable Development Practice and a recent graduate in Health Education. She is also a Community Health Worker at UF HealthStreet. Her interests are in community empowerment, social justice, and environmental sustainability.

Juan Restrepo is a conservation biologist and PhD candidate in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation at UF. He combines ecological and social systems approaches to analyze human-wildlife interactions and has experience in participatory planning and biodiversity conservation.

Pilar Useche is Interim Director of the Tropical Conservation and Development Program at UF. She is also a professor in Latin American Studies and in the Food and Resource Economics Department. Her work focuses on sustainable development, agricultural livelihoods, conservation, entrepreneurship, and innovation.

SUMMARY

This talk follows a shared journey through Colombia's Chocó Biogeográfico, one of the most biodiverse regions on Earth, where student participants experienced firsthand how biodiversity, traditional knowledge, and community life are deeply interconnected. Participants moved through Bahía Solano, San Cipriano, and Pereira, learning firsthand how knowledge, community resource use, and ecological richness are entangled — and how conservation and the need to make ends meet are not always easy to reconcile for the people who call this territory home. The talk will illustrate how, carrying these tensions into their own research journey, summer school participants moved from collaborative fieldwork with communities to laboratory-based bioprospection of macromycetes for antibacterial potential.

**The experience was made possible through the Summer School co-sponsored by the Tropical Conservation and Development Program and the Center for Latin American Studies, together with Universidad Tecnológica del Chocó, UNISARC, and Universidad Libre de Pereira, whose partnership grounded the program in regional expertise and community relationships.



Tuesday - September 15, 2026

12:45 - 1:45 pm



**Grinter Hall 376 or
[Zoom link](#)**



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Tropilunch is a seminar run by graduate students from the Tropical Conservation and Development (TCD) Program. It provides a forum for a range of discussions and presentations related to TCD work and research. Special guests, visiting scholars, and practitioners also participate. It happens weekly around lunchtime.



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