

PALM NEWS

Nurserymen have long sought a way to increase the speed of germination of palm seeds, some of which can take many months to germinate. A recent study by E.M. Bicalho et al. (Plant Biology 17: 990–996. 2015) examined the roles of gibberellins (GA) and abscisic acid (ABA) in the germination of fresh seeds of *Acrocomia aculeata* (endocarp removed). **They found that seeds treated with GA germinated faster and to a higher percentage than untreated seeds.** They determined that ABA levels in the embryo naturally decline during the germination process; consequently the GA/ABA ratio increases. The effective GA treatment was soaking seeds in 2000 mg of GA₃/l of water for 24 hr prior to planting. A summary of their study is here: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/plb.12332/abstract>.



Tarciso Leão

IPS members were **saddened to learn of the death of Dr. Mardy Darian, of Vista, California**, on 25 August 2015; he was 82 years old. Dr. Darian was best known for his many palm expeditions to Madagascar, long before botanists began their modern exploration of the island. He introduced many Madagascar palms into cultivation, and of course, *Marojejya darianii* was named for him. A full tribute to Dr. Darian will appear in a future issue of PALMS.

The Harry Messel Award for Conservation Leadership recognizes exemplary service to the Species Survival Commission (SSC), especially from individuals who have made a specific contribution to species conservation on the ground or through their leadership, as part of the work of an SSC Specialist Group or Task Force. In September of this year, **this prestigious award went to Dr. Mijoro Rakotoarinivo in recognition of his pioneering work on Madagascar palm conservation** during his time working at the Kew Madagascar Conservation Centre in Madagascar. Congratulations, Joro!



Scott Zona

A new study **tracked the movement of systemic fungicide in coconut** (*Cocos nucifera*). Yu and colleagues (HortScience 50: 1327–1331. 2015) found that fungicide injected into the trunk of coconut palms quickly moved into the crown. The fungicide was detected in leaflet tissue, but its concentration in that tissue quickly diminished over the next five weeks. In contrast, the fungicide moved more slowly into the spear leaf, but it persisted there and in the leaf bases for a longer period of time. The results are useful in predicting the movement of injected fungicides in coconut, but at the same time, they raise questions about the advisability and safety of using persistent systemic fungicides in crops that produce edible fruits.