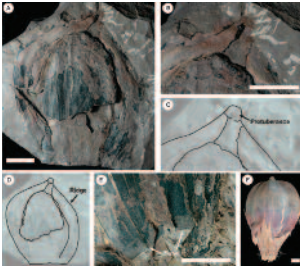


# PALM NEWS



A recent publication by Carolina Gomez-Navarro et al. (*Amer. J. Bot.* 96: 1300–1312.) on **palm fossils from northern Colombia sheds light on the distribution of *Nypa*** and the evolution of Cocosoid palms in South America. A fossil fruit of *Nypa* is one of two oldest fruit records from the Western Hemisphere. The fossil impression of a coconut-like fruit demonstrates that this lineage was already well developed 60 million years ago in the New World.

To the uses of betel nut palm, we can now add disposable bowls, plates and trays. The Swiss company Naturesse, a division of Pacovis AG ([www.pacovis.ch](http://www.pacovis.ch)), is offering a line of **dinnerware manufactured in India from the fallen leaves of *Areca catechu***. The products are manufactured in India from what is called the *Adaka* palm. The articles are made from leafbases, which are cleaned and moistened, formed under heat and high pressure into the desired shape and then trimmed of excess. The resulting plates and bowls are attractively mottled shades of brown and tan, light weight, water-proof and compostable. According to the manufacturer, it is dinnerware that “turns every meal into a special occasion and adds an exotic touch.”



Readers will note the **absence of the Growing Palms section** of this issue of PALMS. We shall continue to publish articles of the kind that appeared in Growing Palms, although they will be integrated with the other articles in the journal, not separated into their own section.

German scientists working in Costa Rica have observed the **Mexican mouse opossum (*Marmosa mexicana*) visiting the flowers of *Calyptrogyne ghiesbreghtiana***. This palm produces sweet, garlic-scented, fleshy stamen tubes in the male flower and similar fleshy staminodial tubes in the female flower, and it seems that this is what attracts floral visitors. It has long been known that bats visit the flowers and can be responsible for pollination, but this is the first time that a terrestrial mammal has been recorded visiting the flowers. In their paper in *Mammalian Biology* (74: 76–80. 2009) E.B. Sperr, E.A. Fronhofer and M. Tschapka illustrate a mouse opossum clinging to a spike of *Calyptrogyne ghiesbreghtiana* and go on to speculate that the opossum could be a potential pollinator, though of less significance than the frugivorous bats that visit the flowers.



A Greek organization, [www.redweevil.org](http://www.redweevil.org), has formed as a call to arms in **the fight against the red palm weevil (*Rhychophorus ferrugineus*)**, which has already destroyed large numbers of palms in Greece. The march of the red palm weevil in the Mediterranean seems inexorable.