

## A New Record of *Manicaria* for Peru

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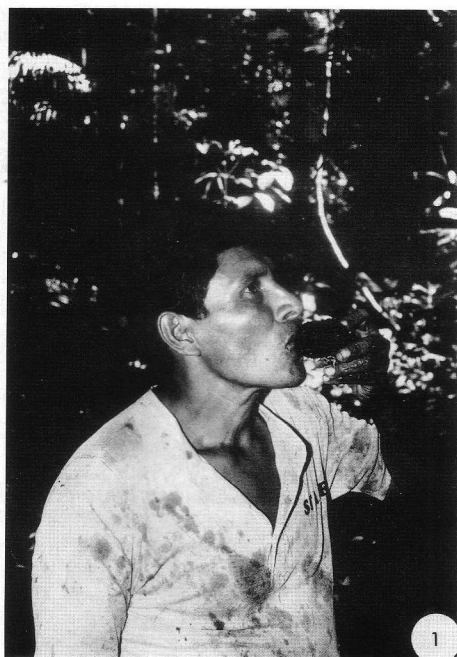
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The genus *Manicaria* occurs in Central America (Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama) and northern South America (Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, the Guianas). It is found in widely scattered localities, often with great distances between them. There is just one species, *M. saccifera* Gaertn., although various botanists have described it with different names. This is a very distinctive palm, with large, usually entire

leaves with serrated margins. The fruits are also very distinctive in being covered with corky protuberances. Plants usually grow at low elevations, especially near the sea. There are also many inland populations, especially along the Amazon and Orinoco rivers. There is one extraordinary occurrence on Cerro Marahuaca in Venezuela, where plants were found growing at 1,200 m elevation.

Until very recently the genus was not



1. Liquid endosperm from *Manicaria* fruits being drunk. 2. The stem of *Manicaria* in the forest near Iquitos.

known from Peru; the farthest west it had been recorded in the Amazon basin was in Colombia, on the Río Apaporis. Now it has been found in Peru (voucher specimen: *C. Grández 2233*). The locality is near the confluence of the Río Napo and Río Amazonas, not far from Iquitos. The palm grows in lowland forest, in an area with almost 3,000 mm of rainfall per year. The forest here is on non-flooded, sandy soils at 130 m above sea level. Other palms growing in association with *Manicaria* are *Astrocaryum huicungo*, *Iriartea deltoidea*, *Phytelephas macrocarpa*, *Socratea exorrhiza*, and *Scheelea* sp. Local people use

the palm in various ways. The liquid endosperm from the fruits is drunk (Fig. 1). Bora Indians use the palm in a special way. "Ampiri" is a mixture of tobacco and the ash from burnt *Manicaria* stems (Fig. 2). This ash contains salt, and by mixing it with the tobacco this is rendered less toxic; it is then taken as a stimulant.

The discovery of *Manicaria* emphasizes how poorly collected the Amazon region is. The region near Iquitos has been relatively well-collected, and yet new records, such as *Manicaria*, are still being found within a short distance from the city.

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