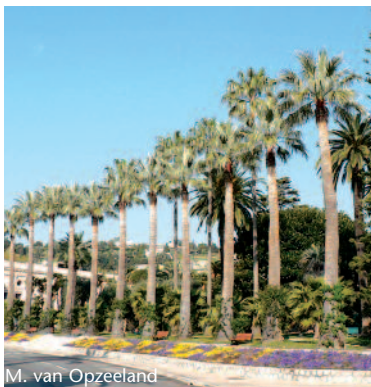


PALM NEWS

Villagers of Bossou, Guinea drill into the terminal bud of *Raphia hookeri* to extract the sap, which quickly ferments into palm wine. A recent open-access publication by K.J. Hockings et al. (Roy. Soc. Open Sci. 2: 150150. 2015) reported that **wild chimpanzees enjoy palm wine just as much as humans do**. Some chimpanzees (about half of the local population) learned to use wadded leaves like scoops or sponges to pilfer palm wine from the collecting vessels and enjoyed frequent bouts of drinking, becoming visibly inebriated... or just sleepy. The authors discussed the relevance of their study to the ongoing debate of how and when ancestral humans evolved the ability – and indeed, the desire – to consume alcohol.

Ganoderma has both friends and foes. Several species are used in traditional medicines and health products, but the fungus is also the scourge of palm growers in both agronomic and horticultural settings. One of the difficulties in studying *Ganoderma* is the chaotic state of its taxonomy. In a step toward sorting out the relationships among species of the *Ganoderma lucidum* complex (which includes *G. zonatum* and *G. boninense*, the major pests of palms), L.-W. Zhou and colleagues produced a **multilocus phylogenetic hypothesis and a key for the identification of thirteen species of *Ganoderma*** (Phytochemistry 114: 7–15. 2015). In the same issue of the journal (114: 160–169.), C.-L. Ho and Y.-C. Tan provided a detailed molecular-level analysis of how *Ganoderma* infects oil palm (*Elaeis guineensis*) and how the palm responds to the infection. It is hoped that a better understanding of which species attack palms and how they infect will lead to better ways of controlling the fungus.



A new investigation of the phytochemistry of *Washingtonia filifera* was prompted by the observation that this species is resistant to the Red Palm Weevil (*Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*) plague that is sweeping through the palm-growing regions of southern Europe. Cangelosi and colleagues reported (Phytochemistry 115: 216–221. 2015) that **the leaf bases of *W. filifera* have high concentrations of a new chalconoid, filiferol, and that this naturally occurring chemical is toxic to RPW larvae**. The authors suggested that filiferol, specifically its concentration in the leaf bases, naturally protects the terminal bud of *W. filifera* from RPW. Perhaps this discovery can inform new preventative treatment strategies against RPW.

As we prepared this issue for press, we learned of the deaths of two much-loved members of the IPS community: **Jim Wright of San Diego, California, USA**, and **Jean-Christophe Pintaud of IRD Montpellier, France**. Jim was well-known in Southern California for his love of palms and willingness to mentor others. He served for a time on the IPS Board of Directors, which brought him into contact with IPS members from around the world. Jean-Christophe will be remembered by the IPS community for his many contributions to palm taxonomy in New Caledonia and South America. Both were champions of palms and will be sorely missed.