

HAUSTORIUM

Parasitic Plants Newsletter

Official Organ of the International Parasitic
Seed Plant Research Group

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● ● WHAT HAPPENED TO HAUSTORIUM?

The editors apologize for the delay in publishing HAUSTORIUM 32. The good news is that we have received support from the Food and Agriculture Organization for HAUSTORIUM. This has enabled us to upgrade computer capabilities and develop a home page. But we still very much need contributions from you! And we still need long term financial support.

● WE'RE ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB!!

HAUSTORIUM now has its own homepage! Find us at the Old Dominion University homepage: www.odu.edu Select College of Sciences, the Department of Biological Sciences, then faculty, then Musselman. At the end of the Musselman page click on HAUSTORIUM. This homepage will be updated regularly. You can contact us electronically at: ljm100f@viper.mgb.odu.edu.

● THE SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON PARASITIC WEEDS

Possible venues and dates for the next parasitic weed symposium were discussed at Cordoba. **Norfolk, Virginia** was suggested as a possible site. The date is yet to be determined but is very tentatively planned for May 1999. Suggestions and offers for sponsorship are eagerly sought!

● ICRISAT *Strigu* Review

A Review of *Strigu* Control in Sorghum and Millet was held at ICRISAT, Samanko, Mali on 27-28 May 1996. Participants from National Agricultural Research Programs in West and Southern Africa; Universities and Research Institutes in UK, Germany and USA; as well as ICRISAT scientists from Africa and India attended the two-day meeting. The review was based on a series of papers which summarized and synthesized the present status of research on methodologies for control of *Strigu* in sorghum and millet. This was complemented by working groups which critically reviewed ICRISAT's past and present efforts on *Strigu* control and made priority recommendations on future research needs to improve the focus and organization of the research and collaboration with existing and new partners (NARS, IARCs, ARIs, NGOs etc.).

The main recommendations of the review included the reinforcement of ICRISAT's strategy to develop integrated control methodologies; the need for ICRISAT to place more emphasis on *Strigu* in sorghum; the need to enhance collaborative linkages for strategic research especially related to better understanding of variability within major *Strigu* spp. for developing sound strategies for resistance breeding and developing improved screening methodologies through the use of existing bioassays and molecular marker technology; the need to develop a well-balanced, multi-disciplinary team in West Africa; and the importance of supporting the Parasitic Weeds Theme of the System-wide IPM Initiative to foster collaboration with IITA and CIMMYT. A pro-

ceedings from the review is being prepared for publication by ICRISAT in 1997.

J. Lenne, ICRISAT, Patancheru, India

● A ROOT PARASITE FROM THE UPLANDS OF SRI LANKA

During a recent visit to Sri Lanka it was possible to travel to some of the higher altitude areas in the center of the island, where the world-famous tea industry is based. The natural sub-montane flora in the 2000-2500 m range bears a striking similarity to the Himalayan flora found at a similar altitude in Nepal some 1400 miles to the north. In both habitats the majestic *Rhododendron arboreum* is a dominant tree species and the large species of *Magnolia* of the middle Himalayas are mimicked by *Michelia nilagiriensis* in Sri Lanka. Among the sub-shrubs *Berberis zeylanica* is a reminder of the gaudy yellow flowered Himalayan species *Mahonia napaulensis* which has contributed so much to the genetic foundation of the varieties of *Mahonia* favored by horticulturists.

This dwarf montane forest is engulfed by cloud for large parts of the year and it is thought to intercept significant amounts of precipitation. Experiments are currently underway to quantify the contribution of this interception to the soil water balance and its importance to the water economy of the upper Mahaweli river catchment. It was while inspecting the site of an experiment in this montane forest that the striking root parasite *Christisonia bicolor* was spotted. *Christisonia* has one of the largest and most spectacular flowers I have seen in the Orobanchaceae. The genus is confined to Asia and most records are from south India and Sri Lanka (the only Himalayan collection - a single collection from Sikkim - has been *C. hookeri*, interestingly) though it extends to China in the North to Burma, the Philippines and Peninsular Malaysia in the East. Clumps of *Christisonia bicolor* can be found among the dark understory of the mature forest. Trimen in the Handbook Flora of Ceylon records that it is parasitic on the roots of Acanthaceae. These are likely to be

Strobilanthes species which are common sub-shrubs in the area. In India both *C. calcarata* and *C. neilgherrica* are reported to be parasitic on *Strobilanthes* spp. (Hooker, 1850). Very little has been published on the genus since it was first described by Gardner in 1847 who recognized seven species. Several additions have been made to the genus subsequently and at least three are endemic to Sri Lanka. There are two closely related parasitic genera *Aeginetia* and *Campbellia* and the taxonomic boundaries between them are not clear and similarly, there is no agreement on the species limits within *Christisonia*. *Christisonia aurantiaca* is considered synonymous with *C. bicolor* but this is not apparent from the illustrations in Wight or from Gardner's original descriptions.

There appears to be almost no information on this group of plants in modern literature. There are illustrations of *C. calcarata* in Wight 1885 and of *C. aurantiaca* and *C. lawii* in Neilgherry Plants published in 1893. Wight was also impressed by the beauty of these plants and suggested that they could be as popular in cultivation as orchids were it not for their parasitic habit. He predicted that one day they would become popular horticultural subjects but to date this has not happened.

The stem is a flattened structure partially submerged in the soil but appearing cobbled and uneven from the numerous large flower buds on the surface. Flowers appear singly or in small groups. They are tubular up to 5 cm. in length opening to a weakly defined bilabiate mouth. The throat of the corolla is deeply purple fading to white at the margins. The style is very persistent with a large clavate, papillose stigma up to 75 mm broad. Styles remain erect from the flattened stem after the corolla has disappeared and the viscid stigma remains pendulous with several in various stages of maturity. Anthers are in two pairs with pronounced spurs articulating on the tips of the filaments at their centers. There appears to be no chlorophyll in any part of the plant. The pollination biology of this peculiar plant can only be guessed but the viscid

persistent stigmata might be attractive to slugs or to snails.

[For beautiful line drawings of these plants, see HAUSTORIUM 32 on the Web]

Philip Bacon, Oxford Forestry Institute, University of Oxford, South Parks Road, Oxford, UK

● FOURTH INTERNATIONAL
WORKSHOP ON *OROBANCHE*
RESEARCH

This symposium is scheduled for **23-26** September 1998 in Albena, Bulgaria and is sponsored by the Institute for Wheat and Sunflower in Bulgaria. The institute is a leading center for *Orobanche* research in sunflower. Sessions will include germination, physiology, growth and development, resistance and other topics of interest to parasitic plant researchers. Albena is a small resort city on the beautiful Bulgarian Black Sea coast. For further information contact the Technical Secretariat for the symposium at fax number (359) 058 26364.

● SIXTH INTERNATIONAL PARASITIC
WEEDS SYMPOSIUM

The Sixth International Symposium was successfully held in Cordoba from 16 to 18 April. About 150 delegates and their spouses attended from at least **30** countries, and enjoyed what must have been the cultural highlight of our series so far, as well as a scientific programme to equal any. The meetings were held in the exquisite atmosphere of the Palacio de Congressos only just outside the walls of the ancient mosque, but the facilities were very much up-to-date. Just over 100 papers were accepted for publication in the attractive Proceedings entitled 'Advances in Parasitic Plant Research' which was available on arrival. About half these were presented orally, the remainder as posters.

The meeting was opened by a represen-

tative of the main sponsors, the Directorate General of Agricultural Research, Consejero de Agricultura y Pesca, Junta de Andalucía. Professor Jose Cubero then treated us to a thought-provoking review of the progress and content of the *six* symposia so far.

The first invited lecture, presented by Dan Nickrent, showed how new molecular techniques using ribosomal RNA, could be used to clarify the evolutionary and phylogenetic relationships between and within different families of parasitic plants. Results have suggested a reappraisal of several of these relationships and confirmed many others. A number of other papers pursued the same theme, using both molecular and more traditional cladistic techniques. These tended to confirm the possible separation of the 'agrestal' *Striga asiatica* from other closely related taxa such as *S. hirsuta* and *S. lutea*, while suggesting a relatively close relationship between *S. hermonthica* and *S. aspera*, the former perhaps representing another 'agrestal species' derived from the latter (invited paper by Mohamed, Musselman and others). The concept of agrestal species might also be applied to the Old World *Orobanche cernualcumana* which has relatively recently evolved to attack New World species such as sunflower, tomato and tobacco. The separation of this pair of species, as well as the *O. ramosalaegyptiaca* pair appeared to be justified by several of the studies. A workshop devoted to the topic of molecular biology provided useful reminders of its potential but also of the need for careful selection of technique to match the objectives of the study. In the most detailed review of the subject to date, Jose Cubero came to valuable conclusions on the relationships within Orobanchaceae, based on cytogenetic studies.

Turning to more conventional morphology and development, there were welcome descriptions of less familiar parasites, including an excellent invited paper from Alfredo Cocucci on *Prosopanche* (Hydnoraceae) in Argentina. Other papers touched upon *Rhamphicarpa*, *Thesium*, *Santalum* and *Arnyema*, trichomes in *Striga*, tuberisa-

tion in *Orobanche*, predation and redistribution of *Orobanche* seeds by soil fauna, while a further novelty was a time-lapse video showing the strange circumnutations of *Viscum album*, as it arrives at the most efficient arrangement of its branches for light interception (R. Dorka).

Papers on host/parasite relationships were introduced by an invited lecture from Klaus Wegmann (not included in the Proceedings), followed later by one on nitrogen effects by Arnold Pieterse and that by Danny Joel on the haustorium and resistance mechanisms. The effects of nitrogen on germination continue to attract attention, while the work of Malcom Press and colleagues reinforces the idea of a role for N in protecting the host from damage. This team also demonstrated clearly how the influence of *Striga* on cereal hosts involves a great deal more than the mere removal of carbon metabolites (which can explain most of the effects of *Orobanche* on tobacco and tomato) though the relative importance of effects on host photosynthesis and re-partitioning of resources, is still not fully clear. Other papers concerned the transfer of S, N and alkaloids from various hosts to *Cuscuta*. Inge Dorr gave us further elegant demonstration of symplastic connections in several host/parasite systems and some new structures in the xylem connections of *Striga hermonthica*.

Several papers reinforced the probable importance of phytoalexins in host resistance, while others showed correlations between peroxidase activity and resistance to *Cuscuta* in tomato, and between enzymes triggering lignin synthesis and the *Cuscuta*-resistance of *Phaseolus*. A report on the induction by *Orobanche* of a defence-related gene in tobacco (by Westwood and others) seems likely to be followed by many more on this theme at future meetings.

In terms of selection and breeding for resistance, no outstanding advances were reported on resistance to *Striga* in maize or sorghum, though several Spanish groups reported valuable new sources of *Orobanche* resistance in wild species of *Helianthus* and

Vicia while Riches reported encouraging progress in the search for resistance to *Striga* spp. in rice and Scharpf corresponding progress in the (very long) process of developing resistance to *Arceuthobium* in ponderosa pine.

Papers on biocontrol were discussed in a workshop session, at which serious doubts were expressed over the practicality and economics of the use of *Fusarium* spp. as mycoherbicides, whether for *Striga* or *Orobanche*. However, the importance of natural soil suppression (by bacteria, as well as fungi) was also emphasized and hopes expressed that ways could be found to enhance this phenomenon, which is presumed to be responsible for surprising declines in soil seed counts of *S. hermonthica* in some studies in Kenya.

For more direct control, the most novel results have been with herbicides applied as seed-dressings, using seeds of normal faba bean treated with imidazolinone herbicides such as imazapyr for control of *O. crenata* (Luis Garcia-Torres and colleagues) and seeds of genetically-engineered herbicide-resistant maize treated with imazapyr and sulphonylureas for control of *S. hermonthica* (Gordon Abayo, Joel Ransom and colleagues). In neither case is complete control achieved but the idea promises to provide the farmer with a relatively simple and inexpensive technique. An especially welcome report was that showing successful selective control of *O. aegyptiaca* in tomato with application of triasulfuron via sprinkler irrigation (Kleifeld and colleagues). Other papers reported promise from more conventional applications of chlorsulfuron to sorghum to control *Striga* in Sudan, imidazolinone herbicides to faba bean to control *Orobanche foetida* in Tunisia and for control of *Cuscuta* in carrots in Israel. Among papers on non-chemical methods, the transplanting of sorghum as a means of reducing *Striga* attack is confirmed as one more option to be considered. Trap-cropping to reduce the *S. hermonthica* seed bank gave disappointing results in Kenya, emphasizing the need for a better understanding of the factors affecting *Striga* germination in the

field, including varietal differences within trap-crops. Another paper was the first to report on the potential for use of agroforestry species for control of *Striga*, and we hope will be followed by many more as realization grows of the importance of longterm improvement in soil fertility.

In a final session on integrated control systems there were no outstanding new ideas, but a welcome increase in consideration of the role of extension and education in the development and delivery of ideas for integrated control systems.

Jose Cubero and Maria-Teresa Moreno are to be congratulated on their superb contributions to the success of this meeting and for arranging fascinating programmes for the evenings and for accompanying persons. All of us will remember Cordoba as a wonderfully colorful, convivial city.

Enquiries about the availability of the Proceedings should be addressed to:

D. Rafael Cantizano
 Direccion General de Investigacion Agraria
 Consejeria de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentacion
 c/Juan de Lara Nieto 1
 41013 Sevilla
 SPAIN

C. Parker

● POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH POSITION IN MAIZE

The Rockefeller Foundation seeks a postdoctoral maize breeder to help implement a program supporting research on the production of African maize varieties with durable resistance to parasitic weeds of the genus *Striga*. The selected candidate will be assigned to a research institute in Africa that is a grantee of the Foundation. Write to:

Postdoctoral Search-Maize Breeder
 Agricultural Sciences Division
 The Rockefeller Foundation
 420 Fifth Avenue
 New York, NY 10018-2702

USA

● TWO EXCELLENT NEW BOOKS ON PARASITIC PLANTS

Dwarf Mistletoes: Biology, Pathology, and Systematics. 1996. F. G. Hawksworth and D. Wiens. Agriculture Handbook 709. United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. Washington, D.C. xiv + 410. Cost not given.

Dwarf Mistletoes is a wonderful book that will be THE resource on dwarf mistletoes for years to come. Beautifully laid out (except, inexplicably, for the front cover with a title difficult to discern against the mistletoe background), this world class monograph is carefully planned, thorough, well documented, and readable. .pp After the succinct introduction, the life cycle of *Arceuthobium* is discussed, emphasizing seedling establishment of the parasite. I find the diagram of the life cycle and the figure of the intriguing ballistic fruits (pages 8 and 9) to be especially useful for classes when discussing fruit dispersal and phanerogamic parasites. Following chapters discuss sexual reproduction, biogeography, host relationships (especially important since dwarf mistletoes are serious forest pathogens), ecology (including biotic relationships other than host-parasite), physiology?pathology, and control. In short, everything you want to know about dwarf mistletoes is here including a table documenting those established beyond their natural ranges, medicinal uses, etc, etc.

Approximately half of the book deals with taxonomy, including molecular systematics. The "formal taxonomy" section includes distribution maps, excellent color photographs (although some are too dark in my copy), and list of specimens examined. Most helpful, however, are the observations of the authors, both keen students of nature who convey their fascination with dwarf mistletoes even in the "formal taxonomy". The list of references is exhaustive and the indices functional.

This book is in memory of the first author, Frank Hawksworth, who died while the present book, a successor to a 1972 edition, was being written. Frank's enthusiasm, keen observation, and love of mistletoes is appropriately enshrined in this outstanding volume. (Adapted from a review to appear in ECONOMIC BOTANY)

Parasitic Plants. 1995. Edited by Malcom Press and Jonathan Graves. Chapman and Hall, London. xii + 292. Cost: £45.

"...an attempt to provide a baseline of information to fill the gap since Kuijt's [1968] text" is the *raison d'être* the editors give for this volume. Simply put, Kuijt's book can probably never be replaced by a single volume due to the tremendous advances made since, and in many cases because of, his *Biology of Parasitic Flowering Plants*. There are simply too many papers. As Press and Graves note, many of these papers are included in the proceedings of the symposia on parasitic weeds. While these volumes are readily available, they are not handled the same way as other archival literature and thus, alas, not utilized as they should be.

The present work should ameliorate this situation by providing a modern (at least up to 1995) treatment of parasitic angiosperms. Almost three decades have elapsed between *Parasitic Plants* and *The Biology of Parasitic Flower Plants*. Therefore, it is not surprising that the approach is different. The eleven chapters are organized more around how the parasites function rather than on taxonomy and morphology. There is an introductory chapter and two chapters on parasitic weeds. The remainder deal with germination, haustorial initiation, mineral nutrition, carbon and nitrogen relations, water relations, reproductive biology, genes and genomes, and host responses.

Press and Graves suggest that this book will find value as a textbook. The cost is prohibitive for general student use, especially when compared to the relatively inexpensive albeit less stringently edited symposia volumes. Considering the state of flux in the field of parasitic angiosperms, I felt it was

better to use the book as a reference in my course in parasitic vascular plants and emphasize rather the primary archival and electronic literature.

This book is very carefully edited and contains useful tables and charts. However, the incredibly poor binding (at least on my copy) lessens its value.

L. J. Musselman

● PARASITIC PLANT INITIATIVE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL CENTERS

On August 26 through August 30, 1996, the parasitic flowering plants task force met at IITA, Cotonou to develop a project proposal and formally launch this aspect of the CG system-wide IPM initiative. During the course of the meeting, the participants focussed on developing a collaborative, CG system-wide project for integrated parasitic flowering plant management in West Asia and all of Africa. The outcome of the meeting was a logical framework for the project entitled Collaborative Integrated Parasitic Plant Management (CoIPPM). The logical framework contains 21 outputs and 67 activities centered around two project themes: research and implementation. In addition, the activities of the project were further focussed around development of 13 pilot sites in the ecoregions associated with the African Highlands Initiative (3 sites), the Desert Margins Initiative (3 sites), the Moist Savanna Consortium (3 sites), North Africa (3 sites), and West Asia (1 site).

It was decided that outputs should be allocated 52% to research and 48% to implementation. The outputs were prioritized within each of these two project themes, and projected funding was assigned to each output based on the prioritization. In addition, it was decided that the IARC to NARES split of the budget allocations would be 20% to 80%, respectively. This resulted from the conviction that this project was heavily oriented toward on-farm adoption

and that NARES would need a larger share of the funds to accomplish this. Matching funds from the IARCs and NARES (based on current core and special project allocations) were estimated to be approximately equal to requested supplemental funding.

Dana K. Berner, International Institute for Tropical Agriculture, Ibadan, Nigeria.

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