

RITAM Newsletter No 42 – February 2006

Dear Colleagues,

1. Africa Herbal Antimalaria Meeting, 20-22 March 2006, Nairobi

The World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) is organising a meeting on herbal antimalarials in Africa. The aim is to share information on the current and future use of plant products in the control of malaria and to develop a collaborative action programme for Africa-wide production and distribution of appropriate herbal antimalarials. A flier and draft programme are attached. Many of the speakers are RITAM members. This will be an excellent opportunity for RITAM members to meet and to review our strategic plan for the future. It would be wonderful if as many people as possible could attend, especially RITAM members in East Africa.

2. *Artemisia annua* controversy

A letter has just been published, stating that “the herbal tea approach to artemisinin as a therapy for malaria is totally misleading and should be forgotten as soon as possible.” [Jansen FH (2006). The herbal tea approach for artemisinin as a therapy for malaria? Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene 100(3): 285-286].

The RITAM *Artemisia annua* task force has been debating this, and is preparing a response. If you are interested in receiving copies of the discussion, please contact Merlin Willcox.

3. Websites of interest

a) Plant Resources of Tropical Africa: www.prota.org

This network is producing monographs on many key medicinal plants. Several RITAM members are already contributing as authors, but there are still several plants in need of authors to write monographs! The information generated by this project promises to be interesting.

b) Prelude Medicinal plant database: <http://www.metafro.be/prelude>

The PRELUDE database relates the use of about 1900 plants in traditional veterinary and human medicine in more than 13000 recipes from Sub-Saharan Africa. Originally constructed at the Catholic University of Louvain (Louvain-la-Neuve), it is now available at the Royal Museum for Central Africa website. The search engine is available in English and French.

4. Recent Publications of Interest

The following are recent publications by RITAM members:

James A. Mbah, Pierre Tane, Bonaventure T. Ngadjui, Joseph D. Connolly, Christopher C. Okunji, Maurice M. Iwu, and Brian M. Schuster (2004). Anti-Plasmodial Agents from *Glossocalyx brevipes*. *Planta Medica* 70, 437-440.

S.F. Mbatchi, B. Mbatchi, J.T. Banzouzi, T. Bansimba, G.F. Nsonde, Ntandou, J.M. Ouamba, A. Berry, F. Benoit-Vical (2006). In vitro antiplasmodial activity of 18 plants used in Congo Brazzaville traditional medicine. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* 104 (1-2): 168-174

Maguerite H. K. Tchuendem, James A. Mbah, Apollinaire Tsopmo, Johnson F. Ayafor, Olov Sterner, Christopher C. Okunji, Maurice M. Iwu and Brian M. Schuster (1999). Anti-Plasmodial Sesquiterpenoids from the African *Reneilmia cincinnata*. *Phytochemistry* 52, 1095-1099.

O.R. Omobuwajo, A. A. Gbolade*, R. Nial and F.B. Adewoyin (2005). Constituents and insecticidal activities of essential oil in *Citrus sinensis* fruit peel. *J. Trop. Med. Plants* 6(2)
<http://www.tropmedplants.com/journal.php?jid=13>

5. New Members:

We welcome the following new members who have joined since the last newsletter:

Dr James Mbah, Assistant lecturer in Chemistry, University of Buea, Cameroon

Mr Jeremiah Senabe, Researcher, CSIR/Biosciences, Pretoria

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Merlin Willcox (Secretary, RITAM)