

drink and lots of seeds to be planted. By the time we were ready to leave, many of the Atikum gathered again to say good-bye, and D. Cotinha, while giving me some bananas for our journey and a big hug, thanked me for bringing my knowledge of *P. harmala*. We repeated the same experience with the Funios and Caimbè, leaving *P. harmala* seeds with them to plant.

After interviewing many people, and participating in different Jurema rituals with the Indians, I also realized that the Jurema they drink in their brew is not *Mimosa hostilis*, but the root bark from *Mimosa verucosa*. Different tribes will call *M. hostilis*, the Jurema Negra and *M. verucosa*, the Jurema Branca, as well as other tribes call *M. verucosa*, the Jurema Negra. That means that when they say that they drink Jurema Negra, it does not necessarily mean they are drinking *M. hostilis*, but *M. verucosa* which is called both: Jurema Branca and Jurema Negra. •

Yatra is director of Friends of the Forest (FOF), a non-profit foundation engaged in the research of psychoactive plants & rituals and the investigation of addiction treatment and other therapeutic applications.

Friends of the Forest
Prinseneiland 97
1013 LN Amsterdam—Netherlands
Tel:31(0)20- 6905394
FAX 31(0)20-6830129
E-mail: yatra@friends-of-the-forest.nl
Website: www.friends-of-the-forest.nl

The Hoasca Project in the scientific literature

IN 1993, a biomedical investigation of long-term drinkers of hoasca (the Portuguese transliteration of ayahuasca) was undertaken, by invitation of the Medical Studies section of the União do Vegetal (*Centro de Estudos Medicos*). This study, which was conducted by an international consortium of scientists from Brazil, the United States, and Finland, was financed through private donations to various non-profit sponsoring groups, notably Botanical Dimensions, which provided major funding, the Heffter Research Institute, and MAPS.

Thus, the focus for the scientific study and understanding of ayahuasca has shifted from the ethnographer's field notes and the ethnobotanist's herbarium specimens, to the neurophysiologist's laboratory and the psychiatrist's examining room.

With the completion of the first detailed biomedical investigation of ayahuasca, science now has the basic corpus of data needed to ask further questions regarding the pharmacological actions, the toxicities and possible dangers, and the considerable potential ayahuasca has to heal the human mind, body and spirit. (excerpted from McKenna et al., 1998)

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