ON THE COVER

Leucosceptrum canum is a large woody plant called the “bird’s Coca-Cola tree” due to its dark-brown nectar that contains a pigmented benzoquinone bird attractant. Its glandular trichomes accumulate defensive sesterterpenoids (C25) named leucosceptroids, which are widely distributed in plants but little studied. Liu et al. (pages 804–822) cloned and characterized a key enzyme (GFDPS) in the biosynthesis of the C25 prenyl diphosphate precursor to sesterterpenoids from the glandular trichomes of L. canum using next-generation RNA-sequencing and bioinformatics. GFDPS is localized to plastids, uses substrates derived from the MEP pathway, and likely was derived from a GGDP synthase gene by positive selection. The cover image by Shi-Hong Luo shows inflorescences of mature L. canum plants covered with numerous glandular and nonglandular trichomes.

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