

T H E
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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 (C_{25}) 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 C_{25} 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.

IN BRIEF

- Should I Stay or Should I Go? Abundance as a New Null Hypothesis for Determination of mRNA Mobility** [OPEN](#) 597
Nancy R. Hofmann
- Phytochromes in Diatoms: Sensing Far-Red Light in the Deep Blue Sea** [OPEN](#) 599
Jennifer Mach
- Putting Down Roots: How Nitrate and Abscisic Acid Help Shape Root System Architecture** [OPEN](#) 601
Jennifer Lockhart

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

- Ws-2* Introgression in a Proportion of *Arabidopsis thaliana Col-0* Stock Seed Produces Specific Phenotypes and Highlights the Importance of Routine Genetic Verification** [OPEN](#) 603
Mon-Ray Shao, Vikas Shedde, Hardik Kundariya, Fredric R. Lehle, and Sally A. Mackenzie
- A Proposal Regarding Best Practices for Validating the Identity of Genetic Stocks and the Effects of Genetic Variants** [OPEN](#) 606
Joy Bergelson, Edward S. Buckler, Joseph R. Ecker, Magnus Nordborg, and Detlef Weigel

BREAKTHROUGH REPORTS

- Transcript Abundance Explains mRNA Mobility Data in *Arabidopsis thaliana*** [OPEN](#) 610
Alexander Calderwood, Stanislav Kopriva, and Richard J. Morris
- Diatom Phytochromes Reveal the Existence of Far-Red-Light-Based Sensing in the Ocean** [OPEN](#) 616
Antonio Emidio Fortunato, Marianne Jaubert, Gen Enomoto, Jean-Pierre Bouly, Raffaella Raniello, Michael Thaler, Shruti Malviya, Juliana Silva Bernardes, Fabrice Rappaport, Bernard Gentili, Marie J.J. Huysman, Alessandra Carbone, Chris Bowler, Maurizio Ribera d’Alcalà, Masahiko Ikeuchi, and Angela Falciatore

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RESEARCH ARTICLES

- Genome-Wide Mapping of Targets of Maize Histone Deacetylase HDA101 Reveals Its Function and Regulatory Mechanism during Seed Development** [OPEN](#) 629
Hua Yang, Xinye Liu, Mingming Xin, Jinkun Du, Zhaorong Hu, HuiRu Peng, Vincenzo Rossi, Qixin Sun, Zhongfu Ni, and Yingyin Yao
- LLM-Domain B-GATA Transcription Factors Promote Stomatal Development Downstream of Light Signaling Pathways in *Arabidopsis thaliana* Hypocotyls** 646
Carina Klermund, Quirin L. Ranftl, Julia Diener, Emmanouil Bastakis, René Richter, and Claus Schwechheimer
- An Ancient Bacterial Signaling Pathway Regulates Chloroplast Function to Influence Growth and Development in *Arabidopsis*** [OPEN](#) 661
Matteo Sugliani, Hela Abdelkefi, Hang Ke, Emmanuelle Bouveret, Christophe Robaglia, Stefano Caffarri, and Ben Field
- Rice HOX12 Regulates Panicle Exsertion by Directly Modulating the Expression of *ELONGATED UPPERMOST INTERNODE1*** [OPEN](#) 680
Shaopei Gao, Jun Fang, Fan Xu, Wei Wang, and Chengcai Chu
- Direct Repression of Evening Genes by CIRCADIAN CLOCK-ASSOCIATED1 in the *Arabidopsis* Circadian Clock** [OPEN](#) 696
Mari Kamioka, Saori Takao, Takamasa Suzuki, Kyomi Taki, Tetsuya Higashiyama, Toshinori Kinoshita, and Norihito Nakamichi
- LIGHT-INDUCED RICE1 Regulates Light-Dependent Attachment of LEAF-TYPE FERREDOXIN-NADP⁺ OXIDOREDUCTASE to the Thylakoid Membrane in Rice and *Arabidopsis*** 712
Chao Yang, Hongtao Hu, Hongyan Ren, Yuzhu Kong, Hongwei Lin, Jiangfan Guo, Lingling Wang, Yi He, Xiaomeng Ding, Magda Grabsztunowicz, Paula Mulo, Tao Chen, Yu Liu, Zhongchang Wu, Yunrong Wu, Chuanzao Mao, Ping Wu, and Xiaorong Mo
- Environmental Nitrate Stimulates Abscisic Acid Accumulation in *Arabidopsis* Root Tips by Releasing It from Inactive Stores** [OPEN](#) 729
Christine A. Ondzighi-Assoume, Sanhita Chakraborty, and Jeanne M. Harris
- HLB1 Is a Tetratricopeptide Repeat Domain-Containing Protein That Operates at the Intersection of the Exocytic and Endocytic Pathways at the TG/EE in *Arabidopsis*** [OPEN](#) 746
J. Alan Sparks, Taegun Kwon, Luciana Renna, Fuqi Liao, Federica Brandizzi, and Elison B. Blancaflor
- The RNA Polymerase II C-Terminal Domain Phosphatase-Like Protein FIERY2/CPL1 Interacts with eIF4AIII and Is Essential for Nonsense-Mediated mRNA Decay in *Arabidopsis*** [OPEN](#) 770
Peng Cui, Tao Chen, Tao Qin, Feng Ding, Zhenyu Wang, Hao Chen, and Liming Xiong
- Functionally Similar WRKY Proteins Regulate Vacuolar Acidification in *Petunia* and Hair Development in *Arabidopsis*** 786
Walter Verweij, Cornelis E. Spelt, Mattijs Bliet, Michel de Vries, Niek Wit, Marianna Faraco, Ronald Koes, and Francesca M. Quattrocchio
- A Geranylarnesyl Diphosphate Synthase Provides the Precursor for Sesterterpenoid (C₂₅) Formation in the Glandular Trichomes of the Mint Species *Leucosceptrum canum*** 804
Yan Liu, Shi-Hong Luo, Axel Schmidt, Guo-Dong Wang, Gui-Ling Sun, Marcus Grant, Ce Kuang, Min-Jie Yang, Shu-Xi Jing, Chun-Huan Li, Bernd Schneider, Jonathan Gershenzon, and Sheng-Hong Li

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