

caution and base our conclusions on scientifically defensible evidence. The evidence is still not conclusive as to whether we can dismiss or substantiate a role for climate change in that phenomenon.

C. F. D'Elia
Maryland Sea Grant College,
University of Maryland,
College Park, MD 20742, USA

R. W. Buddemeier
Kansas Geological Survey,
University of Kansas,
Lawrence, KS 66046-2958, USA

S. V. Smith
Department of Oceanography,
University of Hawaii,
Honolulu, HI 96822, USA

References

1. C. F. D'Elia, R. W. Buddemeier, S. V. Smith, *Workshop on Coral Bleaching, Coral Reef Ecosystems and Global Change: Report of Proceedings* (Maryland Sea Grant College, College Park, MD, 1991).

Rare Trees

The Florida torreyia was described in Random Samples (8 Dec., p. 1573) as "the rarest tree in North America." With a population size of only 1500, it is indeed rare;

but several other trees may be more worthy of this title. For example, Franciscan manzanita (*Arctostaphylos hookeri* ssp. *franciscana*) is presumed extinct in its native habitat on the San Francisco Peninsula, and only occurs in cultivation (1). Another possible candidate is the Presidio manzanita (*Arctostaphylos hookeri* ssp. *ravenii*), also native to the San Francisco Bay area, which appears to have a single clone (1). If full species status is required to be North America's rarest tree, I nominate the Catalina Island Mountain Mahogany (*Cercocarpus traskiae*), whose population size has dwindled to six adult trees (2). This distinctive species is restricted to a gully on the southwest side of Santa Catalina Island off the coast of California. When the population was first discovered in 1897, it consisted of more than 40 trees, but it has declined rapidly over the past century because of overgrazing by introduced herbivores. Fortunately, it appears to be making a rapid recovery as a result of the recent construction of a fence around two of the remaining trees. More than 70 seedlings have been observed in the fenced area (2).

Loren H. Rieseberg
Biology Department,
Indiana University,
Bloomington, IN 47405, USA

References

1. J. C. Hickman, Ed., *The Jepson Manual, Higher Plants of California* (Univ. of California Press, Berkeley, 1993).
2. L. H. Rieseberg and D. Gerber, *Cons. Biol.* **9**, 199 (1995).

Italian Academic Turnover

Susan Biggin (News & Comment, 10 Nov., p. 909) is to be congratulated for the clarity of her description of the conundrum of national competitions for university appointments in Italy. Retirement mechanisms are another peculiarity of Italian academic life that are difficult to explain to the international scientific community. Although full professors retire at age 77, at age 72 they officially abandon their chair and enter a special category ("fuori ruolo"), which implies relief from conventional academic duties, but allows them to retain full salary and the right of sitting—and voting—in faculty councils. In the past, chairs could be immediately open for a new appointment. However, because of recent financial constraints in Italy, new appointments for existing chairs now require the availability of ad hoc financial coverage, which in fact is precluded by the simulta-

DNASTAR
Biocomputing
Software
for Windows
and Macintosh

Visit DNASTAR on the Web at
<http://www.dnastar.com>

Seq 5' TCCATTGTACCTGCTCTTGAATTCGCAATGCTACCGTAACTCTTGTCTATATCGCT
Primer TCCCAATGCTCAAGTAACT
Comp 3' AGGTACATGAGCAGAACTTTACGTTACGAGTGGCATTTCGAACCACTATTACGACT

Frame 1 Ser Ile Val Pro Ala Leu Glu Ile Ala Asn Ala His
Frame 2 r Pro Leu Tyr Leu Leu Leu Lys Leu Pro Met Leu Thr
Frame 3 Val His Cys Thr Cys Ser Asn Cys Gln Cys Ser
Frame 4 sp Met Thr Gly Ala Arg Ser Ile Ala Leu Ala
Frame 5 Gly Asn Tyr Arg Ser Lys Phe Asn Gly Ile Ser Val Thr Leu Arg Gln Asp Tyr Asp Phe
Frame 6 Asn Gly Ile Ser Leu Thr Leu

ACT
✓ACC
ACG
ACA
Other

DNASTAR Inc.
Tel: (608) 258-7420
Fax: (608) 258-7439
Email: sales@dnastar.com

In Europe:
Tel: (+44) 181-566 8282
Fax: (+44) 181-566 9555
Email: sales@dnastar.co.uk

neous coverage of the salary of the "fuori ruolo" professor. The consequent delay in the turnover of professors provides further concern for the cultural renewal of Italian universities (as well as, admittedly, relief to the national pension scheme).

Benedetto Terracini
Department of Biomedical Sciences
and Human Oncology,
University of Torino,
Via Santena 7,
10126 Torino, Italy

Useful Antisense

In her Research News article "Antisense has growing pains" (27 Oct., p. 575), Trisha Gura illustrates the uncertainty that has been encountered when one asks how antisense compounds really work as drugs. The article does not touch on another area where antisense as a technology has worked as it is supposed to and has readily produced products in the market. The genetically engineered Flvr-Savr tomato is transformed with an antisense polygalacturonase gene for delayed softening and increased durability. The antisense expression of a stearyl-acyl carrier pro-

tein desaturase gene has also modified the Brassica seed's oil (canola), resulting in a high-stearate phenotype (1) that could form the basis of a natural margarine.

Ling Yuan
Calgene, Inc.,
1920 Fifth Street,
Davis, CA 95616, USA
E-mail: yuan@calgene.com

References

1. D. S. Knutson *et al.*, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* **89**, 2628 (1992).

Corrections and Clarifications

In the heading of the review of *Brethren of the Net*: *American Entomology*, 1840-1880 (22 Dec., p. 2035), the surname of the author of the book was misspelled; the correct name is Sorensen.

The figure accompanying the Research News article "Can nuclear waste keep Yucca Mountain dry—and safe?" by Wade Roush (15 Dec., p. 1761) was inadvertently inverted.

In the article "China's unique environment favors large intervention trials" by Jeffrey Mervis ("Science in China," 17 Nov., p. 1149), Linxian county is incorrectly referred to as "Linxian Province." In the table on page 1138 of the same issue, the last item, the

"CAS [Chinese Academy of Sciences] Institute of Virology, Beijing," should have been the "Institute of Virology, Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine, Beijing."

Reference 12 of the Report "Defective lymphoid development in mice lacking Jak3" by T. Nosaka *et al.* (3 Nov., p. 800) should have included the following citation: P. Macchi *et al.*, *Nature* **377**, 65 (1995).

In the response by J. Craig Venter to the letter to the editor "Pioneering work" (29 Sept., p. 1805), the words "base pair" and the abbreviation "bp" should have read "base."

The News article "Tracing Croatia's 'disappeared'" by Eliot Marshall (29 Sept., p. 1812) should have stated that Kupres is a town in southwestern Bosnia, not northern Croatia.

Letters to the Editor

Letters may be submitted by e-mail (at science_letters@aaas.org), fax (202-289-7562), or regular mail (*Science*, 1333 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005, USA). Letters are not routinely acknowledged. Full addresses, signatures, and daytime phone numbers should be included. Letters should be brief (300 words or less) and may be edited for reasons of clarity or space. Letter writers are not consulted before publication.

NEW! Ultrafree®-15 Centrifugal Filter Device

**Concentrate 15 mL of protein
down to 300 µL or less in
30 minutes*,
in one spin.**

* 1 mg / mL bovine serum albumin, Biomax™-10 membrane

Call for free samples. U.S. and Canada, call Technical Services: 1-800-MILLIPORE (645-5476); in Japan, call: (03) 3474-9111; in Europe, fax: +33.88.38.91.95.

MILLIPORE

MILLIPORE LAB CATALOG ON INTERNET: ACCESS URL MENU AND TYPE:
<http://www.millipore.com/uf15>