

appearance of the two species is very similar: six to eight broadly rounded ribs with a freely branching base. *Peruvianus* has frosted bluish-green skin and longer spines. There is usually one central spine per areole, with a length of 4 cm, and six to eight 1 cm long radial spines. The woolly brown areoles are slightly larger than *pachanoi's*, with a "V" shaped notch over them. This "V" shaped notch is one of *peruvianus'* main distinguishing features. The honey-colored spines tend to be darker at the tips and bases. Some specimens have branches which aren't as strong as *pachanoi's*, and may be found arching, or even prostrate. Some varieties have greyish-white spines. *Trichocereus peruvianus var. matacana* is reported to have a much superior root system over other *peruvianus* subspecies. -- DD, CA

ANOTHER POSITIVE

PHRAGMITES AUSTRALIS REPORT

I have been pursuing *Phragmites australis* "Giant Reed" as a Ayahuasca analogue ingredient since your Vernal Equinox, 1995 issue, and can now report good results. I encourage your readers to experience it, as my journeys have been excellent and like those described by this unknown writer. *Phragmites* should, by no means, be written off, as it is kinder than true Ayahuasca. Yet it is different. My present recipe is 3 grams of *P. harmala*, following p.57 of J. Ott's *Ayahuasca Analogues* closely. With this small volume of lime juice and incidental water, there has been no nausea. Just boil it 15 minutes and filter it twice with a cotton-shirt. Increase the water and you will experience the trouble of thinking about your body and will probably blow chow. The *Phragmites* rhizome (50 wet gms. More gms. to be tested soon) is simply boiled 20-30 minutes and tastes just fine. This is about 2.5 feet of rhizome if you can only get it dried out. If you drink only the root, or rhizome, at least, there have been absolutely no bad physical side effects to date with 9 tests on four people. *Phragmites Australis* has the advantage of being everywhere, and I'm happy to report, difficult to eradicate in the East. It needs abundant water and is hard to find where I live in Northern California and in the desert. However, I finally found it growing the Sacramento River Delta, and most poetically, next to the mothball fleet of warships an-

chored in the backwaters of the San Francisco Bay. I like to think about the plant spiritually and physically cleansing this horror of American pollution. I have been told by a botanist that he was unsuccessful in his attempt to grow it here, yet I have started five large tubs of it and every piece has sprouted dramatically. I plan to keep some of the plant growing with water lilies under water, and some in mud only damp on the surface. I expect the tubs to fill with rhizomes and almost burst with the wild energy of this beautiful reed.

I am interested in getting a response from other Ayahuascaros on a related subject which I have both experienced and witnessed. It has no physiological explanation that I can understand. My tea drinking has been with *Banisteriopsis caapi* and *Psychotria viridis*, made by Santo Daime church members and brought in from Brazil, and with the analogue plants described above. The California tea drinkers are often new people, new to the experience, but all practicing some dietary restrictions, and none eating at least four hours before the event. Now, some of these people, including myself, all who drank appropriate portions to get off, experience almost nothing at all on some occasions, and soar on others. This has been both "real" Ayahuasca and my analogue. My experience yesterday was with a long time Uniao do Vegetal Church member and myself, this time me soaring and he less (although he reported that his arms started growing pine needles as he transformed into a tree.) The time we drank together last, he became much higher than me. So it appears that it is possible to block the experience sometimes, so that little happens. Although I can't explain this, it would account for reports of no entheogenic results on new plants sometimes, and variability ascribed to the plant material itself. Have other experienced this with their groups? I personally find that I cannot attain great heights without evoking help and assistance from the Source or Sources of the Light. I cannot get off of my own, or, at least, no longer want to try. I need to do this with prayer at the very onset of the tea coming on. I might add that I am a person who never prayed before, and who would not now, I suppose, if I had not been so powerfully answered. May you stay in the presence of the light. May the Light protect our planet. -- Anon., CA