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Scientists find 800 year-old cojoba remains on Taino artifacts [1]

Submitted by Wilson Gonzalez-Espada [2] on 28 March 2014 - 3:15pm

 [2]



Izquierda, árbol y vainas de semillas de cojoba. Derecha, semillas lenticulares de cojoba. Fotos de Jaime Pagán.

Archaeological starch grains consistent with those produced and stored in modern cojoba (Anadenanthera peregrina) seeds were identified, for the first time in the West Indies, in a coral milling base recovered in a small precolonial habitation site of Eastern Puerto Rico, in a context dated to A.D. 115–1250. Ethnohistoric, ethnographic, and previous archaeological data on cojoba from the West Indies and South America were surveyed in order to form plausible sociocultural interpretations of the findings. After experimentally assessing some ethnographic protocols that possibly replicate various ancient ways of processing cojoba seeds for producing hallucinogenic powders related to the so-called ritual de la cojoba, this article proposes that cojoba seeds were processed and used here mainly as an hallucinogenic complement to the healer for the divination of illness.

From: Pagán-Jiménez, Jaime R. and Carlson, Lisabeth A. (2014). Recent archaeobotanical findings of the hallucinogenic snuff cojoba in precolonial Puerto Rico. Latin American Antiquity 25(1).

Tags:

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