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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Alexandria, VA - The evolutionary age of grass has been hotly contested. Scientists have previously dated the earliest grasses to 55 million years ago; after the dinosaurs went extinct. Now, a new 100-million-year-old specimen of amber from Myanmar potentially pushes back grass evolution to the Late Cretaceous.

Scientists from the Oregon State University who studied the amber believe they identified "spikelet" - grass in its flowering state - and a cluster of fossilized ergot, a major ingredient in LSD. While their conclusions are intriguing, and have implications for the plant and fungi evolutionary trees, some challenge the methods used. Since amber specimens can be unique, scientists use noninvasive methods, and some argue these tests result in less rigorous conclusions. Find out if this amber specimen means dinos were potentially dining on hallucinogens and grass in the June Issue of EARTH Magazine:

<http://www.earthmagazine.org/article/amber-encased-plant-could-be-oldest...>

EARTH Magazine brings you the science behind the headlines. The June Issue, now available on the digital newsstand (www.earthmagazine.org), includes feature stories on how modern anthropology is redefining the story of human evolution, a light-hearted investigation into how the film industry portrays geologists, and how flames are fanning the fallout from Chernobyl.

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<http://www.earthmagazine.org/>. Published by the American Geosciences Institute, EARTH is your source for the science behind the headlines.

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Press Release PDF:



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