

Explorers think Mt. Ararat was ark's final stop

United Press International
ANKARA, Turkey — U.S. explorers, including former astronaut James Irwin, have found a boat-shaped formation on Mount Ararat they believe is the site of the legendary wreck of Noah's Ark, the group's leader said Saturday.

Marvin Steffins, president of International Expeditions, told reporters his group located the site Thursday 5,200 feet up the southern slopes of Mount Ararat in eastern Turkey.

"We cannot say that this is Noah's Ark, but we believe we have found the site of it," Steffins said.

His expedition found a boat-shaped impression with measurements fitting the biblical description of the Ark in the sixth chapter of the book of Genesis, he said.

"But I must stress that we don't claim to have found the Ark of Noah itself, although the measurements are similar to those in the Bible," he said.

Steffins said the boat-shaped formation was about 450 feet long and 80 feet wide — similar to the measurements mentioned in the Bible.

Steffins' expedition was one of three U.S. groups of explorers that scaled the 16,946-foot mountain this year in search of the Ark that according to the Bible came to rest

on the mountains of Ararat after the great flood.

Irwin and his "High Flight Society" expedition, and a group of explorers from the U.S. Institute for Creative Research were continuing their work on the northern slopes of the mountain, Steffins said.

He said Irwin, who walked on the moon 17 years ago, was present at the discovery.

Last year, Irwin's expedition scaled the peak of Mount Ararat but was forced to cut short its work after the astronaut fell off a cliff and injured his leg.

"We searched this time on the southern side of the mountain although the general belief was that it was on the north," Steffins said. He said his expedition went to work on the basis of evidence provided by Ron Wyatt, a U.S. explorer who scaled Mount Ararat in 1977.

Steffins posed for photographers holding two plastic bags filled with clay that he said were samples from the site he had found.

"These will be analyzed in the (United) States and preliminary results will be given to Turkey for permission to do archeological work in the area next year," he said.

Steffins said they had asked the local military authorities to seal off the area around Mount Ararat to farmers and tourists "to prevent any damage to the site."

Another language discovered in Brazil

United Press International
SAO PAULO, Brazil — An anthropologist said Sunday she has discovered what may be a new language spoken by Caribbean-origins blacks who arrived in Brazil during a 1930s gold rush and settled in the Amazon jungle.

Anthropologist Julieta de Andrade said a language called Lanc-Patua by its speakers is used by 25,000 blacks in towns and gold mining camps over a 1,200 mile stretch of the Brazilian Amazon.

"Lanc-Patua speakers are descendants of blacks who came from the Guyanas and the French Caribbean during a 1930s Amazon gold rush," said De Andrade in an interview.

She said their French-sounding patois was gradually transformed through contact with Portuguese-speaking Brazilians "into something that sounds like a brand new language."

The pronunciation, spelling and much of the vocabulary of Lanc-Patua show Portuguese influence. But the language also contains words, such as "job" and "drive," contributed by gold prospectors from English-speaking Guyana.

"While French in origin, Lanc-Patua has its own accent, syntax and vocabulary," said De Andrade, vice president of the Sao Paulo Folklore Museum. "Experts may argue

whether it is truly a language or not, but none can deny it is distinctive."

She said there are no newspapers or books in Lanc-Patua, but that its speakers communicate by letter and travel frequently among widely scattered communities.

During five years of study for a doctoral thesis, de Andrade said she found "the Lanc-Patua people very friendly but a little eccentric."

Suspicious of outsiders and often guided by superstitions of voodoo origin, "they rarely give their correct names, instead inventing colorful but false ones."

Family members never attend a loved-one's wake, which is organized by friends. Instead, they play dominoes for eight days straight while friends keep candles lit in a separate room.

De Andrade discovered Lanc-Patua while visiting the Amazon Delta city of Macapa in 1979.

She listened as two women chatted on a street corner in a tongue she had never heard before.

She found 500 Lanc-Patua speakers in Macapa and spent months studying their language, publishing her doctoral thesis "Lanc-Patua and Brazil's Amazon Culture" as a book this week.

"Every country's informal culture offers remarkable things, but most people never bother to notice them," she said.

Common cures can banish garden pests

United Press International
MORGANTOWN — Bugs, slugs and herbivores can be a pain in the petunia to home gardeners.

To protect their plants, many turn to chemicals and put up fences.

A West Virginia University professor of agricultural education has a cheaper and more down-to-earth alternative.

Wayne D. Lawrence has compiled a list of about forty organic remedies used by old-time farmers and gardeners.

"A lot of them have no cost at all," Lawrence said. "They are mostly common items around the home and farm. If you chew tobacco you already have some of the materials on hand."

For example, the professor said, garlic plants repel Japanese beetles, and marigolds fight off Mexican bean beetles and nematodes. Potatoes also are effective against the Mexican bean beetle, Lawrence said.

"Nematodes can be a problem in potatoes, strawberries and any type of root crop," he said.

Green beans tend to repel the Colorado potato beetle, while pepper-mint helps fight flies, which are more of a nuisance to people than plants, he said. Pests that can't be repelled by plants often can be wiped out with other organic materials sprinkled or sprayed on a garden, the professor said.

For example: — Wood ashes get rid of squash borers, cucumber beetles and potato bugs.

— A mixture of water, flour and buttermilk will wipe out spider mites. The formula: 25 gallons of water and 5 pounds of flour to one quart of buttermilk.

A mixture of 50 parts water and to one part molasses "plugs the respiratory system of just about any insect," Lawrence said.

He recommends diluting garlic and tobacco juices with water to make all-purpose plant sprays to fight insects.

To make garlic spray, he said, blend garlic cloves and water in a blender, then strain out the solids.

For the tobacco spray, soak tobacco in water, then dilute the mixture until it's about half as brown as the original.

"The nicotine, I guess, is the lethal ingredient," Lawrence said.

"I'm sure these (remedies) are not as effective as some chemicals. But, on the other hand, these won't get in the human system and cause problems."

To fight slugs, Lawrence recommends saucers of beer — buried at soil level so slugs can just belly up to the trough for a brew.

To ward off deer, rabbits and other herbivores, he said, sprinkle your garden with blood meal, meat scraps or human hair.

"As long as the material has the odor, it tends to spook them away," he said.

For more information about non-chemical solutions to garden pests, Lawrence suggests contacting your nearest county extension agent.

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