The PALMATEER

Volume 20, No. 1 *Central Florida Palm & Cycad Society* *March, 2000*

PALM FEST 2000

Sponsored by: The Palm & Cycad Societies of Florida
Hosted by: The Palm & Cycad Society

The Palm Beach Palm and Cycad Society is hosting the very first PACSOF (Palm and Cycad Societies of Florida) Palm Fest.
The event will be held on Saturday, May 20 & Sunday, May 21 in West Palm Beach

Schedule of Events for Palm Fest 2000

Saturday, May 20:
9:30 AM-10:00 AM - check in at Ruth Sallenbach's Garden
10:00 AM – tour of Ruth's Garden
12:00 PM – box lunch at Ruth's
1:00 PM – leave for Norm & Ann Moody's Garden
2:00 PM – tour of Norm &Ann's
4:00 PM – leave for hotel and check in, relax, refresh
6:00 PM – Social hour with munchies and cash bar
7:00 PM – banquet
8:30 PM – keynote speaker, Don Hodel: Palms of New Caledonia
Sunday, May 21:
Breakfast on your own
10:00 AM – tour of Ann Norton Sculpture Garden
12:00 PM – box lunch at Norton
1:00 PM - ? – giant plant auction
Host Hotel:
Sheraton West Palm Beach Hotel
630 Clearwater Park Road
West Palm Beach, FL 33401
Phone: 561-833-1234
Fax: 561-833-1255
Special rate for event is $69.00 (mention Palm Fest) per room, single or double occupancy

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See You in Tampa?
March 11: Tour One Old, One New Garden

The CFPACS quarterly meeting is, again, on the West Coast. Those members new to the chapter will get to visit one of the great private palm collections in Florida, that of Dr. U. A. Young in Tampa. Roy Works, who cared for the garden for some years, will lead the tour This is an old, established collection with many wonderful mature palms. Don't miss the **real** "double coconut," *Lodoicea maldivica.*
In the afternoon, a few miles north, the group has lunch ("Italian," $5) at Frank Tintera's. The palms here are crownshaft palms not commonly encountered and flourishing in Tampa. Plant sale will follow.
Directions, details on page 2.

A new variant of 'double coconut' growing near Baracoa, Oriente, Cuba. This dreamy picture is another visual palm souvenir of Cuba taken by Peter Mayotte.

Directions to Tampa Meeting

General Meeting time: 10:00 am
Board meeting time: 9:00 am
Board meeting; The residence of Ray Hernandez (9:00-10:00 am)
North of Tampa: Take I-75 south to I-275 south. Follow I-275 south to Lois Ave. Turn left at Lois exit (then see directions below).
South of Tampa: Take I-75 north to I-275 north (over Skyway bridge, through St Petersburg, over Howard Frankland Bridge). Follow I-275 north to Kennedy Blvd (Tampa side of the bay). Follow Kennedy to Lois Ave and turn right at Lois (then see directions below).
East of Tampa: Take I-4 west to I-275 south. Follow I-275 south to Lois Ave where you will turn left at exit (then see directions below).
Continuation from all directions: On Lois, go through intersection at Kennedy Blvd and go to Henderson Blvd intersection and turn right. Follow Henderson and it will curve around and turn into Manhattan Ave. Follow Manhattan through the light at Bay to Bay Blvd and the second street on the left is San Juan St. Make a left at San Juan and it is the second house on the left (red brick) (4315 W. San Juan St).

The residence of Dr. U.A. Young (10am –12pm)
North of Tampa: Take I-75 south to I-275 south. Follow I-275 south to Lois Ave. At the Lois exit, go left. On Lois, go through intersection at Kennedy Blvd and next light is Swann Ave (there will be a large Mediterranean style arch on your right). Turn right through the arch at Swann (first a street then turns into a circle). Dr. U.A. Young's is 505 Royal Palm Way (corner of Swann Circle and Royal Palm Way).
South of Tampa: Take I-75 north to I-275 north. Follow I-275 north over the Sunshine Skyway, through St Petersburg, and over the Howard Frankland Bridge. The very first exit on the Tampa side of the Howard Frankland Bridge will be Kennedy Blvd. Follow Kennedy through the West Shore Blvd intersection until the light at Lois Ave. Turn right at Lois and look for the Swann intersection. Then see directions above.
East of Tampa: Take I-4 west until I-275 south (then same as the North of Tampa directions).

Schedule of Events, Mar. 11

9:00 a. m. Board meeting, Ray Hernandez's house, 4315 W. San Juan St., Tampa. All members welcome.
10:00-12:00 General meeting. First stop, garden of Dr. U.A. Young. See directions at left.
12:30-2:30 Garden of Frank Tintera. Directions at left. Catered lunch at 1:00 p.m. $5.00 per person. Plant sale.

The residence of Frank Tintera (12:30-2:30)
From Dr. Young's, follow the circle back around to the street portion of Swann Ave. and make a left at Lois Ave (at the arch). Follow Lois Ave. north to Kennedy Blvd. Turn left at Kennedy Blvd and follow it to West Shore Blvd. Turn right (north) at West Shore and go through the Cypress Ave intersection until you reach Spruce St. Turn left at Spruce (airport will be on the right) and follow the Eisenhower Blvd/Veteran's Expwy signs (stay out of the Clearwater and Tampa International Airport lanes!!!!!). Once on Eisenhower, follow it until you see signs for Veterans Expressway north. Get on the Veterans and follow it to Waters Ave (there's a $.50 cent toll at the exit). At the exit, go left (west) onto Waters Ave. Follow Waters through the Hanley Rd intersection until the side street Pat Blvd (there is no traffic light since it is a small intersection but it will be marked CFPACS meeting). At Pat Blvd, turn left and the very first street on your right will be Forest Circle. Turn right at Forest Circle and follow it to the end (8336 W. Forest Circle).

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Dilemmas and Lessons for Palm Lovers:

Central Florida Compared to Southern California

By Geoff Stein

(Reprinted by permission of the author. The article was published in the November, 1999, issue of The Palm Journal*, the Southern California Palm Society's quarterly magazine whose editor, Rebecca Rodolff, has also agreed to its being reprinted here.)*

A recent trip to Florida to see the beautiful palms out there was accompanied with a load of revelations about palm growing on the two coasts of the U. S. Though I missed the I.P.S. meeting in Miami, I was able to fly out for a weekend this August [1999], and spent some time in both Central and South Florida. I visited the famous Borassic Park of Mike Dahme, and toured some other gardens in Central and South Florida with him and two other palm fanatics (the unsinkable Ed Brown, and the very sinkable Mark Wuschke). Though it's hard to beat South Florida for palm growing in the continental U. S. (over 500 species can be grown there and some areas don't even freeze), Central Florida is far more interesting in terms of comparison to Southern California. You long time palm growers will not likely read anything here you didn't already know. . . but us less experienced and worldly palm enthusiasts would really benefit from a Florida vacation, just to see how things compare on the opposite sides of the country. It may help explain some things about 'cold hardiness'. . . and it could change your thoughts about wanting to move to Florida, one way or the other.

Until recently I just assumed the climate of Florida was similar to ours (except for the obvious humidity thing). I knew it got cold there in the winters sometimes and warm in the summers, like here. Talking to Mike Dahme about what he was growing there made me think I could grow some of those things here. . . only why had I not seen any of those species in anyone else's gardens out here in California? What I didn't realize was just how different the growing conditions are. A lot of these differences are reflected in the species they can grow in Florida that suffer here, and vice versa. In the following discussion I will try to compare our growing conditions to those in Central Florida, since that is the area most like here (if you had to pick one, that is). South Florida is basically the tropics and North Florida is the arctic tundra in comparison.

The first thing you notice when you get off the plane in Orlando in August is it's HOT—a really sticky and lingering heat that makes the air seem much heavier than our air. It can be hot here, too, but Florid hot is very different. Aside from the humidity, which I'm sure many of the palms love, it's also hot all the time. There may be a week here or there in the Southland [Southern California] when it's hot at night, but basically our nights are very cool and comfortable (comfortable for humans). The nights in Florida aren't a whole lot different from the days. Even in the winters of Central Florida, which can see bitter cold, it's still warm most of the time. The summers in Florida can see night-time lows in the 70s and up for 4-5 months without ever going below that. That translates into a 4-5 month optimal growing season for some very heat sensitive palms like *Borassus, Latania, Sabal, Bismarckia, Coccothrinax, Thrinax, Copernicia, Corypha, Actinorhytis, Orania sp.,* Oil palms and many other species that do so well there. The 'growing season' for those palms here would be, at most, 1-2 weeks out of an entire year. Even inland, like in Palm Desert, where most of those palms do perform better, the growth is still pitiful compared to what one sees in Florida. Several feet of growth a year for many palms in Florida may be routine, while here it would be remarkable (save for the few common 'fast species' that do well everywhere). Ever wonder why there are so few species in commercial cultivation out here in California? Maybe landscapers want large or fast growing plants since most non-palm lovers don't have the patience to wait years for something to stop looking like a little blade of grass. In Florida, one can use a larger variety of palms for landscaping (though, surprisingly, they really don't. . . guess many landscapers are as unimaginative there as here).

Even though the occasional hard freezes may do a few species in, in Central Florida a seedling only looks like a seedling for a year or two. I saw Latanias and Bismarckias that were showing trunk and looking impresive in only 3-4 years. A *Latania loddigesii* just south of

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Orlando, planted since the last freeze of 1989, was about 15-18' tall and had the mature pale grey green leaves characteristic of all adult *Latania*. Similar Latanias in California of that age still retain the brilliant juvenile colors and still look like little seedlings. One of the most beautiful of all the palms (my favorite!), *Copernicia macroglossa*, which is actually pretty cold hardy, surviving freezes down to 22°F. without even much leaf damage, can't seem to even make it out of the seedling stage here in Southern California.

Because of the constant heat and incredible growth rates, even tender species (often referred to as 'annuals' by the local growers) can be grown up quite large and make wonderful specimens. So one can enjoy a Royal, *Dictyosperma* or even a Coconut for 1-10 years (before it is mercilessly killed off by a freeze). I saw many species of exotic and tropical palms growing in Central Florida that were large and looked perfect. Of course, 10 years from now they will mostly all be gone, but then they will probably be replaced by other nice specimens.

As briefly mentioned earlier, humidity is also a hallmark of Florida weather. Though I don't think it's as vital as the constant heat, it sure seems to make the palms look great. The high humidity seems to allow palms to handle the direct sunlight better and tolerate the wind better (at least compared to our arid climate). Brown tipping, so commonly seen on local palms, was nearly nonexistent on the Florida plants. I saw many species of *Ptychosperma, Pritchardia, Pinanga* and *Licuala* that I normally would consider shade, filtered light or, at least, gradual sun palms, look great in full sun in Florida. I must say, most palms looked absolutely perfect.

So why not move there ASAP? Land is cheaper. Less people per square inch. No earthquakes. . . Well, from what I understand, it also gets cold. Though the cold season here never seems to end, it's not nearly as harsh as Central Florida's occasional freezes. The cold in Florida is often associated with heavy winds, too, making the whole experience all the more lethal to the local palm populations. Fortunately for the palm growers out there, it's been 8 years since the last hard freeze and many growers have wonderful maturing exotic tropical specimens in their yards. But the previous 6 years saw 3 hard freezes. . .will the next be far off? Rarely, a real killer cold hits the Southland, like in 1990, but incidents like that occur only every 20-50 years. So while we may be waiting 10-20 years to get a specimen palm that would get there in 3-4 years in Central Florida, we are also more likely to still have that palm in 10-20 years.

One example of this is our common King palm. *Archontophoenix* species grow pretty well out here, but nothing compared to what they do in Central Florida. However, I saw only a few specimens of this genus anywhere in Florida. They grow great, but they also die easily. Also, many of the *Dypsis* species and some of the New Caledonia palms we love so much here in Southern California have a difficult time of it surviving the Central Florida frosts.

There are also many species of palms that just don't like the warm, humid Florida climate. Some we just take for granted like *Howea, Rhopalostylis, Parajubaea, Jubaea, Ceroxylon, Dypsis decipiens* and even some Braheas just can't survive that kind of climate. There are literally none out there. Others like *Chamaedorea, Phoenix canariensis* and even *Washingtonia robusta*, though commonly grown out there, just don't look as good.

So what did I find so fascinating about all of this? Well, mainly that descriptive terms such as 'cold hardy,' 'fast growing,' 'heat loving,' etc. need to be taken in perspective. . .especially 'cold hardiness.' Cold is one of the most limiting factors when it comes to palm growing, and for novice palm growers like myself, it seems like a simple concept at first. But there are very different kinds of cold hardiness in palms. Even though a *Copernicia macroglossa* is cold hardy down to 22°F. (and probably lower) doesn't mean it can survive in my backyard where it never gets below 26°F. Turns out even coconut palms can survive a frost or two without a problem (as long as it's warm in between frosts), even though we can't grow them in areas of California that never get frost. To some palms, our form of cool, though not necessarily lethal in itself, because it lasts for months on end, is a killer. And it turns out there are different kinds of cold. California frosts are nearly always accompanied with a calm, clear night, with relatively low humidity, and they tend to be really brief. Florida cold often comes in the form of a winter storm with lots of wind, high humidity and can last for many hours. So a King palm on a cool California night may get damaged at 27°F., but it could be totally killed off in Florida during a much warmer 'frost.' Cold hardiness is a more complicated situation than I first realized.

I think a new term needs to be applied to palm growing—'Cool Hardiness,' which refers to a species' ability to tolerate (or prefer, even) prolonged periods of cool temperatures (30s-50s F.). Visiting Florida, I was reminded that, although a very important factor, cold isn't everything. Many palms are limited by heat,

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humidity and/or the lack thereof. Some of our more Cool Hardy species, like *Rhopalostylis, Parajubaea, Howea*, etc. actually prefer climates that seem less than ideal for palm growing. They actually like our prolonged cool, and prefer never to be in a hot and muggy climate. So while we pine away for a climate like Hawaii, or even Florida, there are some things to be thankful for living here in Southern California.

And the last bit of perspective I have is on the limits of my own life in the palm world. I always felt I got into palm growing too late in life, and if I had just started out 30 years younger, what a great garden I would have by now and how I could be enjoying all that much more. Maybe I should move to Florida where things grow up in less than half the time? But then at what cost? Seeing some of the things I grew so well for 3-5 years be suddenly frozen to death in a day? Which is worse? Waiting forever, or learning to 'get over it' and plant again? Either way I suppose life can be full of palms. You long time palm growers know that it all pretty much evens out in the end. You stick with it, at any age, and you get nice palms. . . even here in California a nasty cold comes along and screws everything up now and then. You just gotta learn to enjoy the growing of them, as well as them being all grown up some day—sort of like having kids, I guess. If you're a good parent, you may end up with some great children. Sure, tragedies can happen, but if you work at it hard, many can be avoided. And if the world comes crashing down on you and your palms. . . well, then there's always Hawaii.

All in all, it was an enlightening and fascinating visit to Florida this last August. I learned a lot about the differences between palm cultivation here and in Florida, and saw lots of wonderful palms. I highly recommend to any and all interested in palms to take a trip out there and experience it for yourselves. But before you do, there's one last thing that must be said about palm culture in Florida, especially in August (aside from the heat, that is. . . did I mention that it was really hot out there?)—the presence of pests in the gardens.

We have ants and mosquitoes here in California . . . but not like in Florida. There they have fire ants—it's hard to imagine a teensie weensie insect that small can hurt so much. (Note: Mike Dahme wanted to point out here, in all fairness, that this ant is referred to in Florida as the IFA, or imported fire ant. . . they didn't originate in Florida, in other words. So now that we are seeing a few pop up here and there in the Southland, we shouldn't be blaming the Florida folk—it's not their ant, either). Then there's the mosquitoes, which can be so thick there's hardly any room for air between them. I think I actually suffered temporary blood loss anemia from only several hours of wandering about palm gardens. Though I suppose all this doesn't directly affect palm growth, it can indirectly. If you are afraid to go outside, away fom the airconditioning into the muggy, bug-infested swamps to weed and fertilize your palms, they could suffer a bit.

Maybe the biggest take-home lesson I learned from the whole adventure is not to visit Florida in August.

Right, visitors from the French palm group, Manureva, who attended our November meeting, made a pilgrimage earlier to the home of the founder of the [International] Palm Society, the late Dent Smith in Daytona Beach. They are pictured here in early morning shadows. Third from the right is Doris Smith, Dent's widow. To her left are René Coativy and his wife Dominique. (Thanks to Alain Jamet for sending the photo.)

FLORIDA'S NATIVE PALMS: A PRIMER OF 12 SPECIES

By Neil Yorio

Of the 2700 or so species of recognized palms present in the world today, only a mere twelve occur naturally in Florida. If one considers extending the range to the whole of the United States, the number of American natives rises to a hefty fourteen. Among the Florida natives, a few range in the central region of the state and extend to the northern climes and are hence inherently suited for our growing conditions. However, a few hail from the southern locales and have had surprising success when grown in our gardens. It is the intent of the following article to list the Florida natives and to relay information on the natural range of these palms as well as the suitability for growing in the Central Florida region. Information will be included regarding cold hardiness (a very subjective phenomenon), preferred growing conditions, and relative availability. The information is provided from personal experience as well as book sources listed at the end of the article.

1. *Acoelorraphe wrightii*, also known as the "Everglades Palm" or "Paurotis", naturally occurs in southern Florida, but is also prevalent in the Caribbean and Central America. This is a monotypic species (only one species in the genus), and is characterized by being a clumping palm having small to medium sized palmate leaves atop numerous narrow trunks. An abundant palm in cultivation, it is often seen decorating large commercial buildings in our area. Especially attractive specimens are neatly trimmed to showcase the attractive trunks, often of varying heights. Many tests over the years has proven this palm to be cold-hardy for our area, undamaged at temperatures reaching the low 20's F. Although Paurotis palms prefer growing in areas where adequate water is available, they are adaptable to many growing conditions including shade to full sun and well-drained to swampy soil. Over time, this palm can spread to become a large specimen, but its relatively slow growth rate allows it to suit a private garden for a considerable time. Being a natural coastal dweller, this palm is also suited for areas prone to higher salt concentrations in the ground water, as well as light salt laden winds. Though native to the southern part of the state, this species has surprising suitability to our growing conditions and is a highly recommended palm for all areas of the Central Florida region. It is also a palm that is easy to find, being common in many nurseries and garden centers.

2. *Coccothrinax argentata*, also known as the "Florida Silver Palm" or "Florida Thatch Palm" is native to southern Florida and the Florida Keys, as well as many Caribbean isles and Central America. Though many species of *Coccothrinax* exist, this is the only species native to Florida. It is characterized by being a small single-trunked palm with dark green upper leaf surfaces that are silvery underneath. A very attractive palm whose only limit in the garden is the relatively slow growth rate. There are several individuals of this species that have withstood the tests of time (i.e., Central Florida freezes), though many were killed by damaging cold. At the gardens of Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne and the private residence of Dent Smith in Daytona, there exist survivors, albeit with lingering tell-tale signs of cold damage from freezes. Generally a coastal species, *Coccothrinax argentata* requires a sunny location and well drained soils. Most of its native range occurs on limestone derived soils, however it has shown to be adaptable to many types of soil conditions in Central Florida. It is a relatively care-free palm that is easily accommodated in any garden. However, it is recommended for the warmer parts of Central Florida, though its small size lends itself to protection for the areas prone to colder spells. It is generally a species that is not readily available in nurseries, and usually only available from vendors that provide a specialty in palms.

3. *Pseudophoenix sargentii,* also known as the Buccaneer or Sargent's Cherry Palm is native to the Florida Keys as well as the Caribbean and Central America. Two subspecies and three varieties exist, varying in inflorescence length, leaf coloration, and fruit size. The

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one native to Florida is considered the subspecies *sargentii*. Buccaneer Palm is characterized as a medium-sized palm with stiff leaflets that are dark green above and silver underneath. In habitat, it is generally found in coastal areas that are somewhat protected from high winds, on limestone or sandy soils. Very few individuals remain in (Florida) habitat, which currently is Elliott Key, south of Biscayne Bay. Hurricane Andrew in 1992 decimated the small population there down to just a few trees, however a replanting program is underway with seed collected from the original population. This palm is very attractive, and many CFPACS members will freely admit it is their favorite native, if not their favorite, palm. It is a palm that requires full sun or light shade for optimal growth. In cultivation, these palms have been shown to be very adaptable and sturdy, although painfully slow-growing. Typically, Buccaneer palms will produce 1-2 leaves per year, but as young plants, each new leaf is significantly larger than the previous one. Because of this slow growth rate, large specimens are rarely encountered in Central Florida gardens. Another interesting feature about young Buccaneer palms is their juvenile growth habit. Leaves are produced in a single plane (distichous) until after the palm forms a trunk, at which time leaves will begin to emerge radially from the bud. *Pseudophoenix* has been reported to be somewhat sensitive to cold, and coupled with the slow growth rate make it a challenging species for the colder areas of Central Florida. It has been especially challenging for CFPACS member Mike Dahme to grow this palm near his driveway (you'll have to ask him why). Formerly hard to find, they are becoming increasingly more common to obtain at palm sales. Although *Pseudophoenix* still commands a high dollar value, it is certainly worth obtaining and trying for much of our area.

4. *Rhapidophyllum hystrix*, or Needle Palm is native to the southeast United States and the southernmost range is the inland areas of Central Florida. It is generally considered an understory palm, rarely attaining much height above 2 meters. It is characterized by having deeply divided palmate leaves that are dark, glossy green on top and silver underneath. The common name arises from the numerous spiny projections arising from the trunk that are actually derived from the leaf sheaths. Plants are commonly suckering, and form an attractive clump of leaves. Although

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Acoelorraphe wrightii *at the campus of Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne. Owen Yorio, 22 months, provides scale to this nice clump of Paurotis.*

Coccothrinax argentata *in habitat on Big Pine Key. To the left is* Thrinax morrisii. *Plants are growing in nearly solid limestone.*

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typically occurring in moist, shady conditions, needle palms can be grown in full sun, provided they are supplied adequate water. This slow-growing, but very cold-hardy palm is suited for all of the Central Florida area where the growing conditions are similar to their natural habitat. Needle palms have been grown much farther north than their natural range, with several large clumps present in the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. This palm is commonly encountered in many CFPACS gardens and is usually available in nurseries that specialize in palms or native plants. It is an excellent candidate for the garden because of its habit: It fits well underneath and between arborescent palms and other trees.

5. *Roystonea elata*, or Florida Royal Palm (currently considered synonymous with the Cuban Royal Palm; *Roystonea regia*) is native to southern Florida, the Caribbean, and Central America. It is characterized by large, glossy green pinnate leaves atop a tall gray trunk that terminates in a bright green crownshaft. Although not very common in habitat (hammocks in the Everglades), it is very commonly encountered in gardens and public plantings, mainly in southern Florida. The Royal Palm is considered one of the most beautiful palms, perfect for landscaping because of its fast growth rate, stately size, uniform habit, and adaptability. In the garden, it requires plenty of room and full sun. Unfortunately, this palm is uncommon in much of Central Florida because the numerous individuals planted over the years have succumbed to the periodic freezes we encounter. However, several large individuals still persist in our area, having survived (albeit with significant freeze-related trunk damage) even the 1989 freeze. It is commonly available in nurseries that specialize in palms, and occasionally in larger nurseries and garden centers.

6. *Sabal etonia*, or Scrub Palmetto, occurs only in central and southeastern Florida growing mainly along the area known as the central Florida ridge. The native habitat generally consists of sandy soils in relatively open oak and pine scrub communities. It is characterized as a trunkless (or very short trunked) palm with strongly costapalmate, yellowish-green leaves. Distinguishing features of this palm over the other native *Sabals* is the numerous threads that are present on the leaves where the leaflet divisions exist and the erect, bushy inflorescence that is shorter than

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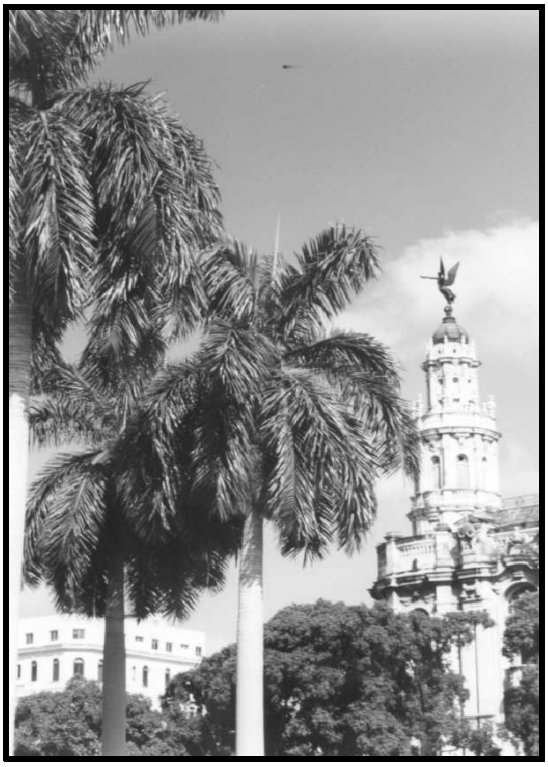
Above, a pair of Pseudophoenix sargentii *palms grace the entranceway to the home of Ed Carlson in Vero Beaach. Mike Dahme (left) and Ed Carlson provide scale. Below, this fine specimen of* Rhapidophyllum hystrix *is in Jerry Hooper's Melbourne garden.*

BOARD SLATE AFFIRMED

Dave Witt, Membership Chair, announced that all ballots returned to him unanimously approved the candidates. New members of the board are Marilyn Bachmann (Central vp), Ray Hernandez (West vp), and Charlene Palm (East vp).



Above, Roystonea regia*, not in Miami but in Havana. The Florida native is also the national tree of Cuba. In the background, right, is the Teatro García Lorca (opera house). From the camera eye of Peter Mayotte.*

A Sabal minor*—modest growth, in scale—against a fence in a Central Florida yard.*

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the leaves. Although commonly found in its native habitat (currently wildlife refuges), it is generally uncommon in many gardens, probably because of its ubiquitous presence in Central Florida. In gardens, this palm is very adaptable to a wide range of growing conditions, and is obviously well-suited for the Central Florida garden. It is very uncommon to find this palm except for the occasional nursery that specializes in palms or at palm society sales.

7. *Sabal miamiensis* or Miami palmetto's habitat is southeastern Florida, and as one might expect in the vicinity of Miami. It currently is considered extinct or close to extinct in habitat due to urbanization of this region of the state. It has similar characteristics to *Sabal etonia*, and the distinguishing feature being the inflorescence that is as long as or taller than the leaves and branched to three orders (compared to a shorter, bushy inflorescence in *S. etonia*). This species appears to be very uncommon not only in habitat, but also in Central Florida gardens. It is assumed that the growing requirements for *S. miamiensis* would be very similar to that of *S. etonia.* It is also likely that finding a plant or seeds of this palm would be through one of the palm societies.

8. *Sabal minor*, also known as Dwarf Palmetto, is native to the southeastern United States from southern Oklahoma and Texas in the west to North Carolina in the east. In habitat, it is commonly found in wetter areas such as floodplains and swamps as generally an understory palm. It is similar to *S. etonia* in that it is a trunkless palm (sometimes a short trunk), but it differs in that it has a long, arching inflorescence (longer than the leaves), and the leaves are weakly costapalmate. Because it is generally an understory palm, it can endure much shadier conditions than *S. etonia*, and the dark greenish-blue leaves add for an interesting look in the shadier parts of the garden. Like the smaller Florida natives, *S. minor* fills a necessary niche in Central Florida gardens because it fits well underneath and in between other larger palms. It is very cold hardy and as such is represented in many Central Florida gardens. Although very common in habitat, it is generally not available except in nurseries that specialize in palms, or in native plant nurseries.

9. *Sabal palmetto* or Cabbage Palm occurs naturally in the southeastern United States, and is very common

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in all of Central Florida. It is extremely adaptable to many growing conditions, however if grown in shade it may not form a trunk until significant light is allowed through the canopy. *Sabal palmetto* is the state "tree" for both Florida and South Carolina (and is even depicted on the South Carolina state auto tag). A very tough and sturdy palm, it is often removed from habitat for landscaping projects and is commonly seen in housing developments or as municipal plantings. It is characterized as a small to medium sized tree palm with strongly costapalmate leaves. Leaf bases tend to remain attached in younger, trunked specimens, while older palms are devoid of the "boots". Young plants can be mistaken for other trunkless *Sabal* species (*S. etonia* and *S. minor*) native to Florida, however *S. palmetto* generally won't flower until some trunk development has occurred. Unfortunately, this common palm is often mistreated by pruning to within inches of its life, a practice that is not only harmful to the palm's overall health, but equally unsightly to the palm lover in all of us. Because of the relative abundance of this palm, and to a lesser extent, its slow growth, it is not commonly encountered in nurseries or at palm society functions. Many people have this palm as a consequence of "volunteering" of seedlings resulting from bird droppings.

10. *Serenoa repens* or Saw Palmetto is native to the southeastern United States and is sometimes mistaken for young *Sabal spp.* The distinguishing features of this palm are fine teeth along the margin of the leaf petioles, non-costapalmate leaf, and the characteristic clumping nature of the palm. This palm is generally not considered a large palm, because of its reclining trunks, but some individual stems can attain some considerable height. This cold hardy native occurs in a wide range of conditions, but is mainly encountered in sandy, exposed areas. The fruits of this species are quite large compared to all other Florida natives (about an inch in length) and the fruits are used in a number of kidney and prostate medicines. Like *Sabal palmetto*, *Serenoa repens* is widely common in all of Central Florida, and is often treated as a weed. Two forms of this palm are recognized based on leaf color, one being the green and the other being the more sought-after silver form. This palm is sometimes found in nurseries that specialize in palms and occa-

(Continued on page 11)

Above, an unusual variegated situation with Sabal palmetto. *Close-up of leaf from a specimen in the garden of John and Faith Bishock in Sarasota. Below,* Thrinax radiata *in the garden of the author. This trunked specimen, now 6' overall, was a one-gallon plant in 1994.*

FLORIDA NATIVE PALMS

(Continued from page 10)

sionally at palm society meetings.

11. *Thrinax morrisii* or Keys Thatch Palm is native to the lower Florida Keys and many other Caribbean islands. It is characterized as a small to medium sized palm that has palmate leaves that are shiny, light green above and silver underneath. Similar to *Coccothrinax argentata* in description and habitat, *T. morrisii* can be distinguished by having split leaf bases and small, white fruit (*Coccothrinax* has dark purple fruit and non-split leaf bases). Intergeneric hybrids have been reported between *T. morrisii* and *C. argentata* which have intermediate morphology to the suspected parents. *T. morrisii* is well suited for exposed garden situations and is very salt tolerant. Adding to its carefree lifestyle, *T. morrisii* has been successfully grown in many Central Florida gardens, testing the cold hardiness and adaptability of this species. Up until recently, there have been a number of large specimens of this species at the campus of Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne. Unfortunately, some of them have been removed for unknown reasons. The unexpected success of this palm for Central Florida encourages further trials to explore the northern limits of this species. This palm is generally available in nurseries that specialize in palms as well as palm society sales.

12. *Thrinax radiata* or Florida Thatch Palm occurs in the upper Florida Keys and many Caribbean locales. It is characterized as having palmate leaves that are bright green on both sides. Like its cousin, *T. morrisii*, Florida Thatch Palm has distinctive split leaf bases and small, white fruit. Unfortunately, unlike its cousin, it is not as hardy to cold, but it is quite carefree and adaptable to many growing conditions, including considerable salt exposure. Because it is not a large palm, it could be tried in areas of protection in some of the colder locations in Central Florida. It is relatively common to encounter this species in gardens to our south, and many Central Floridians are attempting to grow it. It is generally available at reasonable cost in nurseries that specialize in palms and palm society sales.

Although all palms native to Florida are generally available either at nurseries that specialize in palms, or through the palm society sales and seedbank, many Central Florida gardens seem to overlook these wonderful palms for their gardens. Perhaps it is due to the ubiquitous nature of some of these palms that leads some to consider them contemptible. In some cases, people have tried and failed with some natives due to pushing the range of cold hardiness, soil suitability, or light requirements. It is hoped that more people will seek out and attempt to grow these palms in their gardens because they can add unique ornamental features not easily gained with other exotic species.

Information Sources:

Jones, D.L. 1995. Palms throughout the world. Smithsonian Institution Press, USA

Henderson, A., G. Galeano, and R. Bernal. 1995. Field guide to the palms of the Americas. Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ.

Meerow, A.W. 1992. Betrock's guide to landscape palms. Betrock Information Systems, Inc. Cooper City, FL.

Serenoa repens, *above, in habitat on the coastal dunes of Melbourne Beach. The silver form, left, is found only on Florida's southeast coast; the green form (right) is the more common.*

PALMS IN A NORTHERN VIRGINIA BACK YARD

By
Eric Schmidt and Toni and R.D. Robertson

This summer (1999) a commercial lawn service sales representative was greatly mystified to find a few palms among other trees and shrubs in the Robertsons' Northern Virginia back yard. A little explaining soon settled this mystery and we would like to share the background with our fellow Central Florida Palm Society members.

In 1995, Eric Schmidt provided his wife's parents (the Robertsons) a set of "hardy palms" for survival testing in their Washington, D.C. suburban back yard. One of those palms, a *Sabal minor* (See Photograph 1), has survived since that time, even making it through the sequence of blizzards of 1996 (including a record snowfall known as the "Great Blizzard of 1996.")

During the summer of 1997, Eric added a few more palms to the Robertson collection. These included a Mediterranean fan that is still hanging on (See Photograph 2) and a *Nannorhops* that was apparently eaten by some suburban rabbits and thus did not survive.

Additionally, the Robertsons are now enjoying a thriving needle palm as well as windmill and cabbage palms. All three specimens are now facing their third winter.

The needle palm is especially happy in its setting (See Photograph 3), as indicated by the inflorescence that it exhibited this summer (See Photograph 4). The windmill palm has grown slowly but steadily (See Photograph 5). The cabbage palm has held its own size and shape very nicely (See Photograph 6).

The Robertsons enjoy visiting palms (and their son-in-law) in Florida and never miss a chance to stroll through and photograph Harry P. Leu Gardens in Orlando and Fairchild Tropical Gardens in Miami. However, their favorite "gardens" are the ones that Eric has planted in his mother's yard in Orlando and in their yard in Northern Virginia.

Eric enjoys visiting his "northern palm outpost" (and his in-laws) in Virginia and never misses a chance to explore the National Arboretum. As Eric has written in a previous issue, the National Arboretum (located in Washington, D.C.) is the site of a rather large needle palm as well as state trees from all fifty states, including a needle palm that represents Florida.

Sabal minor, *above (Photo 1)*

Above, Chamaerops humilis *hanging in (Photo 2).*

Right, Rhapidophyllum hystrix *(Photo 3).*

That's the inflorescence on the Rhapidophyllum hystrix *(Photo 4).*

Trachycarpus fortunei, *happy (above) in Dale City, Virginia, a Washington, D. C., suburb (Photo 5). Below, an infant* Sabal palmetto *(Photo 6).*

It's time to have your PALM READ

By L. A. Davis

(This story, with pictures, appeared in Florida Today*, Cocoa, last summer and is reprinted here by permission. It is typical of the kind of publicity useful to spreading the word on palms and cycads. The spelling and capitalization are exactly as in the newspaper.—Editor)*

They line up along our roadways and boulevards like so many tin soldiers:sentinels of paradise and a constant reminder that weare living in a subtropical zone. Palm trees are part of the "Florida" look. They grace our postcards, our tourist literature aand our best landscaping efforts.

For those who want their own palm trees swaying in the breeze, now [July] is the time to transplant, said Jerry Hooper, a landscaper whose private botanical garden conjures images of a Singapore plantation.

"The best time to transplant palm trees is the summertime," said Hooper, who owns Southern Shade Trees and works mostly through referrals. "That's when they grow new roots. They slow their growth when the soil gets cool."

Some palm trees shouldn't even be planted in this area because they aren't cold hardy enough, Hooper said.

"I belong to the Central Florida Palm Society and our members keep a record of what's cold hardy and what's not. Some palms will survive for a few years, but sooner of later they'll go—especially if we have a freeze like the one in 1989."

Because it's not cold hardy Hooper won't plant a coconut palm in his West Melbourne yard, but he does have plenty of other varieties. Walking through Hooper's yard is an education in exotic palms and another type of plant that looks similar to palm trees but isn't: cycads. Cycads tend to look like palms, but actually are related to ferns and pine trees, he said.

One of his most exotic palms is a corypha utan. "This has the largest flower stalk in the world. Once it blooms, it dies. It's terminal."

Another palm, a huge tree with silvery palmate leaves is the star of Hooper's front yard.

"This is bismarckia nobilis. It's native to Madagascar," Hooper said of the tree, which probably is 25 feet high, 20 feet across and still growing.

Other specimens include needle palm, foxtail palm, triangle palm, ribbon fan palm, king sago, carnauba palm, traveler's palm and a teddy bear palm with an outer skin that feels just like a stuffed animal.

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ASK TOM

By Tom Broome

Hello. A question, how often is the pollen of the male (of course) Cycas revoluta *available?*
Thanks in advance, Gaston

The pollen from *Cycas revoluta* drops from the male cones over a 3 to 4 week period. This time period varies on where you are on the earth. Here in Florida, it is usually around May or June, depending on the weather. You can also store pollen in the freezer for 3 years and it will still be good, but you would need to know how to do that. This way, it could be available all year. However, the way the plants work is that the females become receptive during the same time that the males are dropping pollen. If you have access to a lot more males than females, you will almost always be able to find pollen before you will need it.

How is the emergence of clear colored jelly, from wet weather (on some, but not all of the freshly cut and older/previously cut leaf bases), related to the cycads' health? Thank you! Mike

On the freshly cut leaves, it is a way to clean the wounds and get rid of any impurities that might get into the plant. As far as when the plant gets too wet, this seems to be a mechanism to expel any extra moisture that could end up rotting the plant. Cycads normally don't like being wet, just moist enough for all the processes to work within the plant. Many times, when the plants get too wet they could rot unless they do something about it. I have seen plants expel this jelly right from the apex as well, after a 4-inch rain here in Florida.

The U.S.F. Spring Plant Festival

The Spring Plant Festival at the University of South Florida in Tampa will be on Saturday, April 8th and Sunday, April 9th. The times are 10:00 AM to 4 PM on Saturday. The members of the garden can come in at 9:30 AM. Vendors can purchase plants at 9 AM On Sunday the times will be the same but closing will be at 3 PM.

The USF sales are our best sales of the year. We have many people coming out to buy plants and to talk about palms and cycads in general. We are happy to answer any of your questions about cultivation of your plants and sometimes we even give out free plants that have been made available. We had many new vendors at the Fall Festival last season. We are planning to have these new vendors again, as well as our faithful vendor that come each year.

To get to the garden from I-75, get off at the Fowler exit and go west. You will travel a few miles and then will see the campus. Make a right at the main entrance. Stop at the first light and turn left. The road will end at the garden entrance. From I-275, you will want to go east for about a mile and then turn left into the main entrance.

If you need more information on the sale, or would like to be one of our vendors, please contact me, Tom Broome (863) 984-2739. I hope to see everyone there!

This beautiful little Licuala grandis *lives dangerously: outdoors at Ed and Joyce Carlson's in Vero Beach..*

From the Editor's Desk

Well, have we survived the winter, relatively intact? At this point (February 13), there's still the rest of the month to go and, for the cautious, the first week or so in March. For Vero Beach, at nearly the southernmost end of Central Florida—and coastal, at that—it's been chilly in the daytime for the past week or more, mostly with highs in the 60s, lows in the 40s and 50s. Coldest so far has been the morning of January 26. It was 36° as the low, but with a slight breeze all night, no frost settled (as it does at 40° in cloudless, dead calm). There was light cloudiness, which is helpful. Some shingles on the roof showed frost and, on the ground, a small patch of burned wedelia. In the morning after marginally frosty nights, I look immediately at the wedelia which acts as frost sentinel, much like the condition of the canaries warned coalminers in the past. Later, I also spotted blackened new leaves on an exposed *Tithonia* ("Bolivian sunflower"), a vigorous weed with beautiful flowers. No sign of any palm damage, though unhappiness at the low temperatures was evident to the perceptive observer.

Those of you more northerly and inland have had freezing temperatures, of course, but not—I think—anything beyond, or below, the usual. Winter is always the proving ground for palms and cycads, whether we have gone beyond the prudent in our choice of species is put to the test, eventually. Vero Beach is full of newly-planted coconut palms from Home Depot and Wal-Mart. Most of the homeowners who have so happily purchased these were not living here in 1989, and may have moved to Vero within the last five years. The town has a radio station, WTTB, the call letters of which express the old motto of Vero Beach: "Where the Tropics Begin." On 60s horticultural publications, Indian River County was shown as the northernmost outpost of South Florida. However, after the regular freezes of the 70s and early 80s, the state decided that South Florida began somewhere in Martin County and its regional maps re-assigned Indian River and St. Lucie to Central Florida. Bill Bidlingmayer has told me that when he came to live in Vero Beach in the late 50s, the town was full of coconut palms and royal poinciana (*Delonix regia*) trees, now long since gone. When I arrived in the early 70s, almost every lawn sported a *Veitchia* (now again *Adonidia*) *merrilli*. These disappeared in the series of 80s freezes, but are once more re-appearing.

You will have noticed that this issue of *The Palmateer* is much smaller, little more than half the size of December. Actually, that was your membership Christmas/Hanukkah/Kwanzaa treat. Really, though, I had many stories to put in, even before Dave Witt unexpectedly sent along his term paper on freezes in Central Florida. I didn't have much left over, a few odds and ends, most significantly Eric Schmidt's contribution on palms in Northern Virginia. You do realize that I am at the mercy of contributors: when I get a lot, you get a lot. It works the other way, too. I am too kind to name the procrastinators out there who told me they were writing something for the newsletter. **You know who you are!** (I've even seen drafts, proposals, etc.) I may be driven, for the next issue, to flagging down cars on SR 60, to demand palm pieces. And, I just might include some essays from my students on sundry topics, such as buying beer, driving fast, or dodging the cops.

No one has yet thanked me for stapling into the December issue those two pages of stock information from Quicken on Nabisco. This was the plum in your Christmas pudding. The pages were just laying around the printers and, like magic, got put in. Not one of *my* patented mistakes. Perhaps you noticed that a few lines on the bottom of a couple of articles were missing. Board candidates Ray Hernandez and Marilyn Bachmann never concluded their statements. (Anyone wishing to know can contact me.) A few captions were deprived of their punchlines and one or two headlines were missing words that might have conferred some meaning. (We won't mention the ballot, all there but scrambled. Less said, the better.)

The computer on which I'm composing this must be set to the printshop's computer. I did do that in December. But then, to print something unconnected with the issue, I changed the computer back to the chapter's printer. What I should have done afterward was to reset the computer again to the printshop's computer. However, I forgot to do this. The zip disk containing the issue was incorrectly set, with the results I've mentioned. There were a few comments, all favorable (of course) about my initiative (or absence of mind).

I promise *not* to commit this atrocity again. Hopefully, pictures will be a little better in the current issue.

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From the Editor's Desk

(Continued from page 15)

I've tried to make them bigger, which should help the quality. But snapshots with much shadow or with many other things in the background do not reproduce really well, especially when the original color shot is converted into black and white. Pictures transmitted electronically come in color and cannot be adapted to black-and-white reproduction—at least, not with the equipment I presently have.

The November meeting at the Besses' was enjoyable for all who attended. Thinking about it later, I was made uncomfortable at realizing that I did not know about half the people there. I'm not including in that number the French visitors from Manureva, but West Coast members. Except for Roy Works, whom I'd never encountered before, I introduced myself to no one and no one introduced himself/herself to me. What a shame. Perhaps we should go back, at meetings, to those tags "Hello, My Name Is…" If this happens, I would hope that the tag wouldn't just say "George," which leaves me hanging. It should say "George Brant, New Port Richey." The sign-in sheet works well for attendance but not for casual conversation. On the other hand, if I wear a tag that says "Editor," I may get a pie in the face. Decisions.

I'm waiting to see how my Hurricane Irene damaged palms pull through—or not. A raggedy leaf is opening at an unhealthy angle on a 10-foot *Carpenteria* with a bent crownshaft. *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana* 'Ilawarra' is in the same shape but is twice as big and more vigorous. Now what about Charlene Palm's *Coryphas*? Anybody out there in Central Florida Palmland to explain twisted crownshafts and such?

John Kennedy

Dead *Sabal palmetto*

Newspaper reports a few months ago have thrown light, not unexpected, on the main reason for the deaths of thousands of *Sabal palmetto* on Florida's West Coast. Rising saltwater levels have done in the state tree, possibly as a result of global warning. As we Floridians know, these palms grow almost on the dune line on beaches and in salt marshes around the state. Clearly, they can take a good deal of exposure to salt in the air and in the soil. Those visible in salt marshes are growing slightly above the level of the marsh; their roots are a bit above the water line. But the roots cannot take being immersed permanently in salt water.

***Allagoptera arenaria* Germination**

Mark Grabowski of Cocoa Beach revealed at the November meeting in Sarasota an unusual way of germinating this stubborn-to-sprout species. He put the cleaned seeds in a Ziploc bag with damp sphagnum moss. The closed bag , wrapped in a towel, then went on top of his water heater. Mark got virtually 100% germination, almost simultaneously, in three or four weeks. However, this worked only once for him, with seed ripened in full summer heat.

***Acrocomic* Surprises**

Doing a little overdue post-Christmas weeding, what to my wondering eye should appear but a miniature (armed) palmlet. The seedling had not been there a few months earlier when I peered through the grass at a juvenile *Sabal yapa* growing close by. I recognized immediately *Acrocomia aculeata*. I had put three seeds given me by Bernie Peterson directly into the ground—as he had said I should-- **five** years ago.

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What palm is this? Bismarckia nobilis *var. 'pygmaea'? Not really. A* Bismarckia, *more than 20 years old, planted in the wrong place. In the deepening shade of growing laurel oaks on a neighbor's property, this palm— and another of the same species a few feet away—never developed a trunk. Chalk one up to inexperience in years past. The Editor gives grumpy scale to his mistake in Vero Beach.*

(Continued from page 16)

One seed germinated three years later (I had forgotten about it). This leaves one more seed to germinate. Tune in next year to see if the third also rises.

Scalping Palms

A regrettable but common sight is palm "trimming." As seen in my neighborhood, it is practiced by folks in pick-ups who make "unsightly" palms neater for the anxious homeowner. The result is the removal of all green leaves that are horizontal; the palms seem to be gasping for breath, arms raised above their heads. Palms that look like a feather duster apparently are much in demand. I'm not accustomed to feeling sorry for queen palms but the practice is more than ugly, it sharply curtails the palm's ability to manufacture nourishment. Some Florida Native Plant Society members have been so upset at maintenance crews' depredations on *Sabal palmetto* that a trifold brochure has been printed, pointing out how destructive this is. The brochure is available in quantity, presumably at cost, from Marine Resources Council, 270 Paint St., Rockledge, FL 32955, (407) 504-4500.

Bromeliad Pest

The latest plant pest to hit the state is an exotic weevil that destroys native bromeliads, and presumably many other bromeliads. It's called *Metamasius callizona*, presently found in Palm Beach, Broward, Dade counties, and in smaller counties north and west. In our area, it has been presently located in St. Lucie, Indian River, Brevard, Highlands, Manatee, and Sarasota counties. Nat DeLeon, chairman of the Florida Council of Bromeliad Societies, has issued an appeal for funds to support research for biological controls. More info about the weevil's spread can be found on the Web at www.ifas.ufl.edu/frank/wvbrom 1.htm (Dr. Howard Frank, University of Florida) or at www.fcbs.org

Native Palms

The Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) publishes a quarterly magazine, *The Palmetto*. Typically there are ads for several native plant nurseries around the state. Those in South Florida usually list the more tender of the native palms described by Neil Yorio in his article elsewhere in this issue.

--**John Kennedy**

MAY 8: DEADLINE FOR JUNE ISSUE
THE JUNE ISSUE OF *The PAL-*

One of the garden visits at Palm Fest is to Ruth Sallenbach's in Lake Worth. Its wonders include two huge clumping Caryotas. *The exact species has not been determined.. Those lacy leaves are at least 8 feet long.*

That's a fruiting Coccothrinax miraguama *in Vero. The fruit are bright red. Ed Carlson apologizes that the squirrels got what was intended for the CFPACS seedbank.*

A POSTSCRIPT TO CENTRAL FLORIDA FREEZE REPORT

By Mike Dahme

These remarks are intended to build upon those of Dave Witt in CFPACS 19:4 with the intent of focusing on a few of the lesser-planted species that survived the 1989 December freeze at Central Florida locations without permanent damage. Location abbreviations are as follows: BID—prior homesite of Bill Bidlingmayer south of Vero Beach; DAH—my home in South Brevard; FIT—the university in Melbourne; KEN—home of John Kennedy in Vero Beach; LEU—Leu Gardens in Maitland; MCK—McKee Botanical Garden in Vero Beach; MIC—home of Joe and Anne Michael north of Vero on the A1A side; SMI—home of Doris Smith in Daytona Beach; and WID—home of Bud Wideman in Cocoa Beach.

Low temperatures recorded by Joe and Bud for that freeze were 19 deg F and 23, respectively, perhaps the more urban environment at Bud's, 50 miles or so north, accounted for his warmer temperature. In general, though, a low of about 20 can be presumed for the entire region (colder north of Orlando), and, thus, at the least in the case of established, healthy plants, survival for the following can be hoped for, or even expected.

Actinorhytis calapparia—WID, one specimen. This betel nut lookalike evidently has considerable hardiness. Whether Bud's experience was an aberration has yet to be determined.

Aiphanes aculeata—(previously *A. caryotifolia*)—WID, one specimen, which regularly produced viable seed in the '90s. See remarks above.

Allagoptera arenaria—BID & KEN. John's two, descended from an earlier one at BID, have survived freezes since the '70s with foliage burn, and seed irregularly.

***Arenga pinnata*—**LEU, MCK & MIC. That the Leu Gardens specimen survived the '80s (their Queens did not) says it all. The Sugar Palm should be much more widely planted than it is, and the seeds presently being donated by Bud Wideman from his fruiting specimen make this easily accomplished.

Attalea butyracea—SMI? *A. cohune*—MIC & SMI?, *A. speciosa*—MIC, and *A. spp.*—BID (two). Any and all of the various *Attalea* (includes *Scheelea* and *Orbignya*) *spp.* should be experimented with if for no other reason than (in many cases) it takes decades for the plants form above-ground trunks (and many of species are acaulescent), thus would be protected from freezing. The specimens at SMI, now approaching 50 years in age (approximately 25 feet high overall), have only in the last decade formed clear trunk. However, the four specimens at BID and MIC have significant trunks and survived the freezes of the '70s and '80s, anyway.

Bismarckia nobilis—BID, DAH, FIT & MIC. Twelve specimens in total, no losses. Although many authors (Meerow, in *Betrock*, for example) treat this species as a Zone 10 plant, a healthy specimen of some size should be expected to survive 20 deg F, i.e., be a suitable planting for Zone 9B in Florida.

Borassus spp.—FIT & MIC. Three specimens of the African form. The two at MIC, providentially one of each gender, have been showering Florida with seeds since the early '90s, the only in-state source now other than Fairchild.

Brahea brandegeei—BID & MIC. Completely cold-hardy but of note because this species may be the only *Brahea* suitable for the Florida climate.

Coccothrinax argentata—FIT & MIC, *C. crinita*—FIT & MIC, and *C. miraguama*—BID. Survival of these specimens should at least lend hope to those with suitable soil (neutral or alkaline) and a somewhat protected, full-sun location.

Copernicia baileyana—BID, *C. berteroana*—DAH, *C. hospita*—BID & MIC, and *C. macroglossa*—BID, DAH & MIC. Clearly there is much promise for these species, likely many others in the genus. The Caribbean species are slow, and many (but not *C. macroglossa*) may have an aversion to acidic soil.

Corypha umbraculifera—MIC and *C. utan*—MIC. Five 40 (plus)-year-old specimens at Joe's have survived all of the freezes from the 1960's on. Other species, *C. taliera* and *C. lecomptei*, have become available more recently, should be tried as well.

Desmoncus orthacanthos—MIC? This clumper recovers rapidly from the roots: though all stems had been cut at time of the chapter's March '99 visit, the plant was sprawling over ad-

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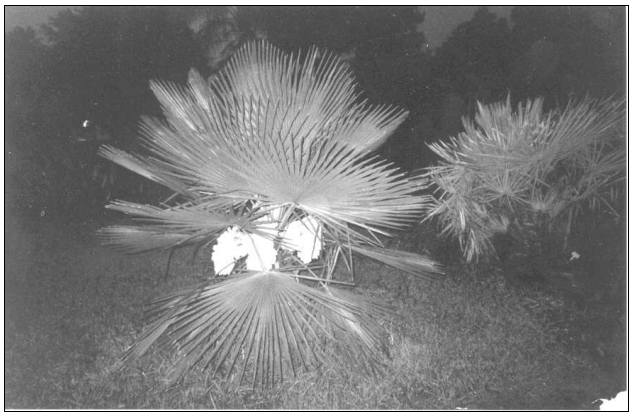
Livistona australis, *left*, *may be cold hardy but not hurricane hardy: tipsy after Irene, at Borassic Park, Grant. At right, Jacksonville by moonlight (or flashcube): Ed Brown's* Trithrinax brasiliensis *in flower. Next palm is* Copernicia alba *(or maybe* C. prunifera*).*



POSTSCRIPT TO FREEZE REPORT

(Continued from page 18)

jacent plantings well before year's end. Discretion required for the planting site!

Elaeis guineensis—DAH, FIT & MIC. Although this species is very foliage-tender and very resentful of cold, it has survived with no losses that I am aware of at these locations. May not be a suitable candidate for locations further north.

Hyphaene spp.—BID, DAH, FIT, MIC, SMI & WID. This genus, which is in need of a monograph, succeeds well in Florida, perhaps the most trouble-free of the Borassoids.

Livistona drudei—DAH. Nine specimens nearly totally defoliated but no losses. Many other species of the genus (aside from just the well-known cold hardy four) should be tried.

Sabal domingnesis—BID? & MCK?, *S. mauritiiformis*—FIT & MIC, *S. mexicana*--MIC, *S. rosei*—BID? & *S. yapa*—FIT. All of the 15 or so species of *Sabal* are hardy enough to survive at least in Zone 9B. *S. mauritiiformis* is likely the least hardy but, along with *S. yapa*, perhaps possessing the most beauty. *S. rosei* (and *S. pumos*) are distinctive for their slender boles and diminutive crowns, *S. domingensis* (and *S. causiarum*) for their overall massiveness, and another, *S. uresana*, for its variable silver coloration. The unusual species of this genus should be much more widely planted.

Thrinax morrisii—DAHH, FIT & MIC. Very slow-growing, but it survives the cold and, though native to limestone areas, seems forgiving of soil type.

SEEDBANK REPORT

By Mike Dahme

Donations for seeds of 25 species distributed in the three months ended January 00 just exceeded $1,000. In addition to the usual suspects, donations of *Hyophorbe vershaffeltii* seed by Mark Thoe and *Arenga pinnata* by Bud Wideman were very popular and appreciated. Donations for these two, both from plants in Brevard County, totaled almost $200, with Bud's hand-pollinated Sugar Palm continue to shed seeds—this palm is cold-hardy [for survival purposes] for Zone 9B and should be in everyone's Central Florida yard.

Other donors for the period included three for four species of cycads, Hersh Womble for *Cycas revoluta*, the Montgomery Botanical Center for *Dioon spinulosum*, and Neil Yorio for two *Zamia spp*, the Florida native and one which he produced at home, *Z. pumila*. Ed Carlson provided a copious quantity of seeds from an *Archontophoenix* he bought in '92 as *A. sp.* 'Peach Creek,' turned by '94 monograph to *A. tuckeri*. This offering proved popular, resulting in requests exceeding $100 in revenue. Also from the area, seeds of five species from Joe Michael in Wabasso Beach and nine from The Droppings in Grant each provided receipts exceeding $200, while Ed Brown in Jacksonville is thanked for his home-produced *Trithrinax brasiliensis* [*See top of this column.—Editor*] and imported *Rhopalostylis*.

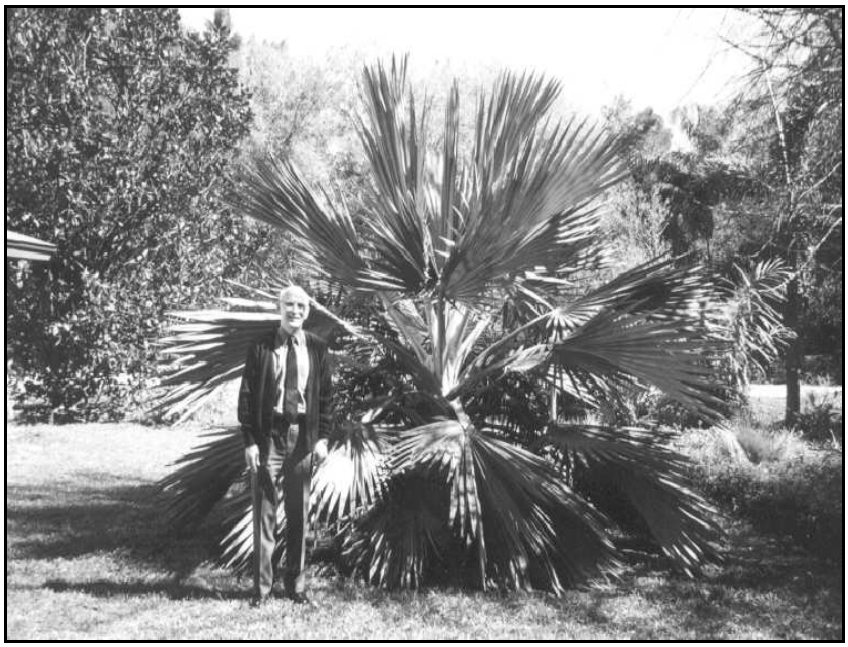
Finally, from overseas seeds of a *Chamaerops* variant called 'Vulcano' came from Martin Sloos in the Netherlands and, from frequent donor Lou Thomas in Belize, came seed of the Peach Palm, *Bactris gasipaes*.

MAY 8: THE DEADLINE FOR MATERIAL FOR THE JUNE ISSUE

ANNUAL SPRING SALE AT LEU GARDENS ORLANDO Saturday March 25, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Sunday March 26, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

It's that time again, break open the kid's piggy banks, forge those payroll checks at the office, adjust your tax bill - just do what you must, but be there for our annual sale in Orlando. This year's event promises to have 4 or 5 vendors with lots of unusual palms & cycads for sale. Part of the proceeds to benefit our chapter. There's free admission and parking, shuttle carts to carry your plants to the pick up area, great food and best of all - free knowledgeable advice from yours truly & a cast of others. If we don't have the answer then by God we'll make one up! See you at the sale and don't forget your wallet ... or purse.

—Dave Witt



The pride and joy of one Vero Beach backyard. *Latania lontaroides* arrived in a 12-gallon pot in 1982, a chancy replacement for two palms of the same species that were killed in earlier freezes. The palm above survived, half its present size and with protection, 18°F at Christmas, 1989, and was half defoliated. In the summer of 1991, healthy and undistorted leaves began to be pushed out. Every winter is a gamble, a test, for a species just a bit north of where it's happiest. Sharp observers may be able to pick out the old male inflorescences that the owner has not yet cut off.

Right, from the pen of Geoff Stein, a palm that doesn't like Florida. Parajubaea cocoides *is an Andean palm that likes California's low humidity and winter cool. The larger plant (top) is noted to be 10 feet* high *and, perhaps, 12 years old. The juvenile (below) is said to be 3 feet high overall and possibly 6-7 years old. Unless we Central Floridians actually go to California (or to South American habitat), we won't see this palm except in pictures or drawings. But doesn't the 'unsinkable Ed Brown' grow* Parajubaea *in Jacksonville?*

Palm Read

(Continued from page 13)

As he conducts his tour Hooper explains that through the centuries, palms have proved their worth to man, providing food, such as dates and coconuts, and raw material for building, roof-making and basket-weaving.

"Rattan is a palm," said Hooper. "A lot of people think it's a kind of bamboo, but it's a spiny palm."

But not everyone has the time or desire to collect, plant and grow exotic palms. For those who just want a few trees in their yard, there is help, said Bernie Peterson, a friend of Hooper's who is on the board of directors of the International Palm Society and the horticultural columnist for its publication, *Palms*.

Peterson is the production supervisor at Rockledge Gardens, which sells palms along with other trees and plants for the Florida landscape. The three most popular palms in East Central Florida are the queen palm, pygmy date palm and the washingtonia, he said, but he only recommends the first two.

"The queen palm grows pretty quickly to between 15 and 20 feet. It's a medium-sized palm with a straight, smooth trunk and dark green plume-like leaves. It's very tropical looking. A queen palm in a 3-gallon pot sells between $10 and $15," Peterson said.

"The pygmy date palm is a small palm which eventually grows between 8 and 10 feet tall. It's very commonly planted in groups of two to three. Since it's a slow grower and small, it can be used near buildings and even in pool enclosures. It has a slender trunk and feathery green leaves which are 3 to 4 feet long. When you plant several together, the trunks tend to curve out, which gives a very graceful effect."

"Its cold hardiness is less than the queen palm. Yo want to protect it by planting on the east or south side. Of course, it is a pygmy—it never gets so huge that you couldn't cover it if you had to.

"The washingtonia is the third most popular with Central Floridians," he said. "But it grows very tall, up to 80 feet here. In California they get over 100 feet tall. The reason they don't get that tall here is because lightning will kill them before they get that tall. They're a natural lightning attractor. I don't recommend them."

While native palms usually aren't cultivated for sale at nurseries, two natives are popular with landscapers because of their staying power, Peterson and Hooper said.

"The sabal palmetto, commonly known as the cabbage palm, is the state tree," Hooper said. "It's an

(Continued on page 22)

The idea behind Palm Fest is to bring members from all the individual palm and cycad societies together to renew friendships, make new ones, talk about their interests in palms and cycads, and just have fun. That is the whole idea behind PACSOF – to bring all the societies and members closer together throughout the state. This event will be held every year and hosted on a revolving basis by one of the Florida palm and/or cycad societies.

Our Keynote speaker, Don Hodel, is a very well known palm researcher and author. He is the Cooperative Extension Environmental Horticulturist in Los Angeles for the University of California. His books include *Chamaedorea Palms*, *The Palms and Cycads of Thailand*, and *The Palms of New Caledonia*. His talk will be on the palms of New Caledonia. This should provide a preview of what to expect for those going on the IPS biennial this year in October.

The garden tours are some of the best of what Palm Beach County has to offer. Ruth Sallenbach has a five acre estate full of many species of palms as well as other tropical flora. Her husband, Hank, began collecting and planting many years ago so many specimens are now quite large. We are still trying to identify some species. It is a favorite garden of palm nuts and Ruth is a very gracious host.

Norm and Ann Moody have also been collecting and planting palms as well as many other species of tropical plants on their five acre estate for many years. Once you come through the gate, you will feel you have entered a tropical rainforest. Norm and Ann are also very gracious and their garden is also a favorite among palm enthusiasts.

The Ann Norton Sculpture Garden has been undergoing a great deal of improvement for the last few months. It features perhaps the largest public collection of palms and cycads in Florida outside of

(Continued on page 23)

Palm Read

(Continued from page 21)

easy tree to care for. Once it's established, it doesn't need special care."

"Landscape designers like them because they're slow growers," Peterson said. "They can plan they'll get to a certain height and no taller. Also, cabbage palms are relatively inexpensive because they are dug from the wild and transplanted. You can get a 12– to 14-foot cabbage palm for around $100 or a little more."

The other native palm growing in popularity is the saw palmetto.

"You see the saw palmetto growing everywhere," Hooper said. "The ones with silver leaves are nice. And, lately they've gotten a lot of notice for their berries. It seems the Native Americans noticed they had medicinal properties."

Saw palmetto berries are being touted by the health food industry as an aid for prostate problems. Like echinacea and garlic, extracts from saw palmetto now are on the shelves of many drug and health food stores.

"They're a bit more expensive than a queen palm because it takes longer for them to grow," Peterson said. "A 3-gallon pot may be $15 or more. Still, if you think about not having to feed it fertilizer because it's a native, you may save money in the long run."

One advantage of the saw palmetto is it is salt tolerant and will do well near the ocean, Peterson said.

"We also find you can plant coconut palms near the ocean where it's warmer in winter and they're very salt tolerant," said Anne Killingsworth, garden center manager at Ace Hardware in Cocoa Beach. "But you still need to protect them.

"Another native plant that looks like a palm is the coontie. It's a cycad, but it does well near the ocean, too."

For those who may want to look at palms rather than plant them, there are several places in East Central Florida to visit. The Florida Tech Botanical Garden in Melbourne has more than 200 species among its 2,000 palm trees, according to Verna Layman, spokeswoman for the university.

"Some of them are quite rare," she said. The botanical garden is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily.

The Brevard Zoo in North Melbourne also has many varieties of palms scattered throughout it premises, said spokeswoman Marilyn Collins. The zoo is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., seven days a week.

While the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge has only native palms, they are on a nature trail called Palm Hammock Trail, said Ron Hight, manager of the refuge.

"What's nice is that you get to see them in their native habitat, which includes marshland," said Hight. The trail is open from daylight to dusk, seven days as week

"There's also a botanical garden in Vero Beach," said Peterson. "McKee Botanical Gardens on U.S. 1." McKee, which lost its tourist appeal after Interstate 95 was built through the area. It closed some years ago, but is slated to re-open within a year.

For more information about palms, call Peterson at Rockledge Gardens at 636-7662/ For more information about the Central Florida Palm Society call Hooper at 676-3458.

[There is a sidebar story on planting palms, and four photos of plants in Jerry's yard. Did anyone call, Jerry? McKee is now slated to open "by the end of this year," according to Andreas Daehnick, its Director of Horticulture. —Editor]

Message from the President

Welcome all new and returning members of the Central Florida Palm and Cycad Society! We have had a fantastic year in 1999 in terms of membership growth, and the trend seems to continue for 2000. Let's keep this membership drive going. All members should take on the role of ambassador for the society and offer information on how to join the CFPACS to other potentially interested people

I have often driven by houses that have lots of Washingtonias and Queen palms planted in their yards and thought, "These people obviously like palms, they just need to know where to learn more about them and where to obtain more species for their gardens."

This is the job for members to help others get bittne by the palm bug. The CFPACS has even made it easy to do with a membership brochure, free for the asking from several of the society officers. For all members, I would like to extend an invitation to attend the board meetings. These meetings are usually an hour long and held prior to the first garden tour during the regular quarterly meetings. If you would like more information regarding participation with the board meeting, please feel free to contact any officer.

The CFPACS would really like you to provide feedback on how you think the society is going.

—Neil Yorio

PALM FEST 2000

(Continued from page 21)

Fairchild Tropical Garden. It is an old Garden with many mature specimens. Ann Norton was an artist who made several large sculptures that are situated throughout the Garden and add an artistic flavor. We will have a box lunch here and a giant plant auction. We encourage everyone to bring a plant to the auction. Proceeds will help recover costs incurred with Palm Fest. It will also be a fun time to perhaps pick up a unique plant for your garden.

Saturday evening will begin with a social hour at 6 PM. There will be fruit, crackers, and cheeses to munch on as well as a cash bar available. At 7 PM we will be seated for the banquet. Food will include a shrimp cocktail appetizer followed by the main course of stuffed Cornish game hen *a l'orange* sauce with wild rice. Also included is a salad, rolls, dessert, and beverage of coffee or tea. Don Hodel will follow with his talk on the palms of New Caledonia. Plan on a great time socializing and having fun.

If at all possible, we would suggest car pooling going from Garden to Garden to reduce number of vehicles that need to be parked.

There is a registration fee is $60 per person, which includes munchies at the Social hour, the banquet, box lunches on Saturday & Sunday, and the travel costs of bringing Don Hodel to speak.

If you have any questions, please contact Rick Kern at 561-791-8437 or by email at allaboutgrowing@mindspring.com

If you get lost, call 561-371-2604 for directions. See you around 9:30 AM Saturday morning, May 20!

Registration for Palm Fest 2000

May 20 and May 21, 2000

Please fill out separate form for each person attending

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** ___ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____

Chapter affiliation: _____

Registration fee of $60 should accompany registration form.

Registration includes box lunches both days, munchies at the social hour, and banquet dinner featuring shrimp cocktail appetizer, Cornish hen with all the trimmings, and dessert.

Make your check payable to:
Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society or PBPCS

Send your registration form and check to:
Palm Fest 2000
C/O Rick Kern
1754 "B" Road
Loxahatchee, FL 33470

There will be no confirmation mailed of payments received, however, please feel free to contact Rick Kern to confirm registration was received. You can reach him by phone: 561-791-8437 or email: allaboutgrowing@mindspring.com

To be sure and get an accurate count of how many lunches and dinners will be needed, we ask that you mail your registration on or before **May 5**. If you plan on attending but cannot get your registration sent in before May 5, let Rick know so you will not be left out.

[Copy on Palm Fest provided by Paul Craft]

WINDMILL PALM EXPERIENCES ST. PETE

By Phil Stager

In March of 1990, I purchased a fairly mature *Trachycarpus fortunei* and had it delivered and planted in my backyard in St. Pete. The palm appeared in excellent health and had almost five feet of clear trunk. The palm was planted in burlap cloth in sandy soil slightly above grade to allow for drainage and settling and in full sun. The petioles on the palm leaves suggested that it had been grown in partial to full shade since each succeeding leaf was smaller in size and with a shorter petiole than the preceding one. The palm did flower for about five years.

This palm had begun a slow decline that ended with its removal about two months ago. I tried wiggling the trunk and it wiggled way too much for a healthy tree. A little digging and closer inspection showed few roots from the trunk to support the dying tree.

While digging out the old root system I noted the following:

1. Hardly any of the burlap wrapping had rotted away.
2. Few roots had grown out of the burlap wrapping.
3. The soil in the original root ball was a heavy blue-brown clay.

The poor old palm had not adapted at all to its new home and took approximately ten years to die. In retrospect, this is the only large palm I have planted that was set in the ground with burlap wrapping intact.

A double *Washingtonia robusta* planted ten feet away at the same time and a *Roystonea sp.* Planted a few months before about 15 feet away are thriving, e.g., the *Roystonea sp.* had seven growth rings on it back then; it now has over 20 ft. of trunk to the base of the crownshaft.

Approximately five years ago, I planted a much smaller *T. fortunei* (1 ft. CT) in deep shade. It is growing very slowly—but it is growing, not declining. Conclusions:

1. Never plant a palm wrapped in burlap, especially if it is going from one type of soil into a very different one.
2. *T. fortunei* is a very slow grower in my part of St. Pete—south end, sandy soil, high water table.

If I knew ten years ago what I know now. . .

Join us! The Central Florida Palm & Cycad Society requests the honour of your membership. No previous experience of palms & cycads necessary, only a willingness to look at them and talk about them to others equally besotted.

Send check for $10 (3 years for $25) made out to CFPACS
To:

CFPACS Membership Chair
7026 Burnway Drive
Orlando, FL 32819

Membership year begins January 1; new members receive back issues of *The Palmateer* for that year.

Name _____
Address_____
City, State, Zip_____
_____
Phone/Fax_____
E-mail_____

Willing to be listed in CFPACS Directory?
_____

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May 8: deadline for submission of material for June issue of *The Palmateer*

DATES TO REMEMBER

March 11: First quarter CFPACS meeting, Tampa (see pp 1 & 2)

March 25-26: Leu Gardens, Orlando, Spring Sale

April 8-9: University of South Florida, Tampa, Spring Plant Festival

May 20-21: First Annual Palm Fest, West Palm Beach (see front page)

September 9: Third quarter CFPACS meeting, Brevard County, details to be announced

October 28: Fourth quarter CFPACS meeting, Hersh Womble's garden, Groveland, details to be announced

January, 2001: Trip to Montgomery Botanical Center, Miami, date and details to be announced.

International Palm Society

Regular membership $35.00
Commercial $45.00
Family $45.00

Name_____
Address_____
City, State_____
Zip_____
Email_____

Membership year begins Jan. 1
Mail check to:
International Palm Society
P.O. Box 1897
Lawrence, KS 66044-8897

The Palmateer
Central Florida Palm & Cycad Society
3225 13th Street
Vero Beach, FL 32960-3825

Dutch Palm Curiosity: *Chamaerops humilis* 'Vulcano'

Martin Sloos, CFPACS member in the Netherlands, has donated for our fund-raising seed (long-since gone) of this unusual variant of a familiar species. He reports that the leaves feel like plastic. All us Central Floridians would be willing (yes?) to lug the "pot" in and out of the garage on chilly nights. Note the pallet. The forklift must be parked just out of camera range.