# The Palmateer

*Volume 21, Number 2* *Central Florida Palm & Cycad Society* *June, 2001*

*No, not Marilyn and Roger Bachmann's* palazzo *in Gainesville, but Daryl O'Connor's domicile in suburban Brisbane (when not prowling around Queensland with the other* Lost Boys. *See story on page 9)*

## June 9th Meeting, Gainesville

**By Marilyn Bachmann**

**Come to Gainesville!**

**Why come** to Gainesville to see palms? Hybrids! From the young garden of Roger and Marilyn Bachmann to the older garden of long time palm grower and hybridizer, Merrill Wilcox, and among the palms of Kanapaha Botanical Garden, you will see hybrids as well as a diverse group of palms surviving here in Gainesville. At Kanapaha Botanical Garden, there is a nice palmetum of species and hybrids, including Merrill's crosses involving *Butia*, *Syagrus* and *Jubaea*.

**The day** begins at Roger and Marilyn's home (Board meeting at 9:00 a.m., view the garden from 10:00 - 10:45 a.m.). The garden, which got its first palms in 1994, has mostly young palms. Most species which will grow this far north are here, as well as many which are either marginal or won't survive without

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*March Meeting Report*

## *Brevard Gardens/Beaches*

**By John Kennedy**

**A sunny** day, warmer than those early days in the month (70s), a bit of a breeze. . . the setting for the March 10th meeting of CFPACS in Brevard County. First stop was in Indialantic, the second in Cocoa Beach, the third in Merritt Island.

**Scott Ward's** lovely house in Indialantic was scarcely visible to the visitors, obscured as it is by *palms, cycads*, and assorted tropical greenery. As usual, the palm-lover's abode can be distinguished from a block away by tall palms that tend not to be queen palms or, usually (Ray Hernandez notwithstanding), washingtonias. Everything is labeled for those of us not sure if we're looking at this species or that. Scott had posted pictures of what the property looked like a bare five years ago: much like the adjacent houses, with their stretches of grass, few shrubs, the mandatory queen palm or two. Gradu-

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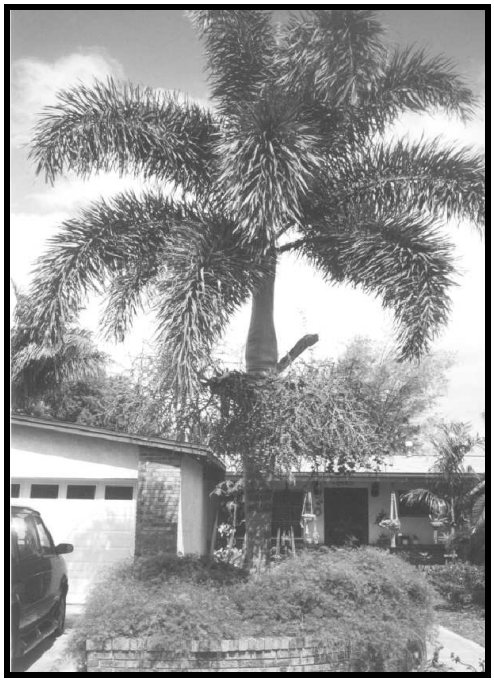
*A* ***mighty*** *Foxtail seen at Steve and Cindy Rael's in Merritt Island during the March meeting, ready to bloom.*



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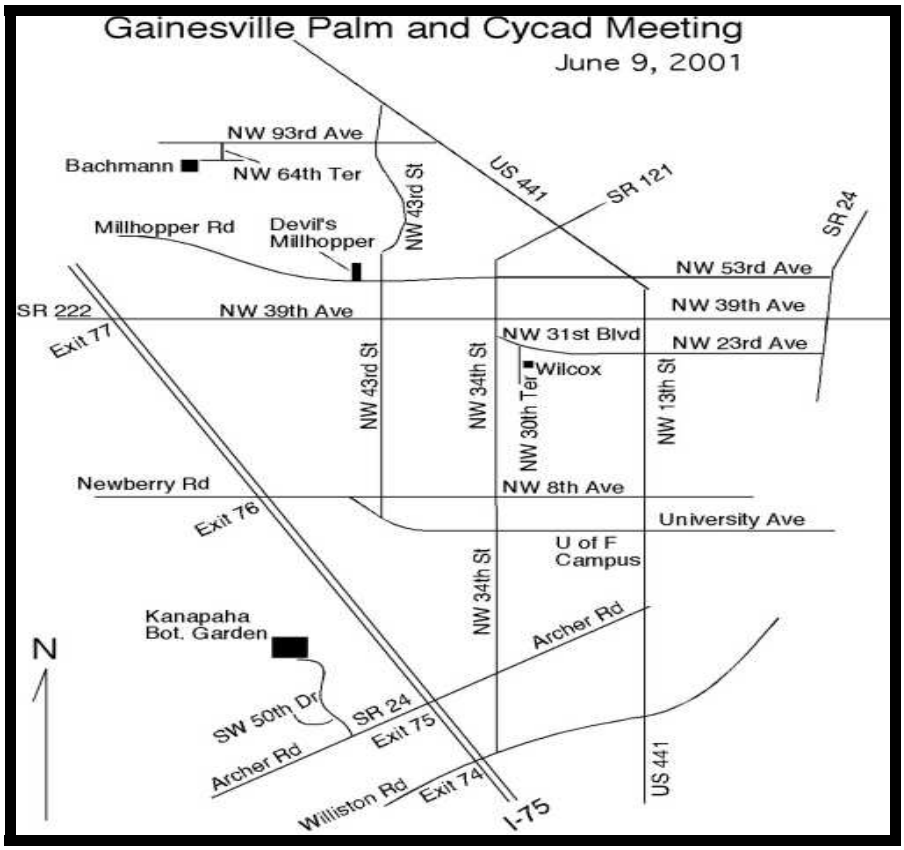
**Deadline for September issue: AUGUST 6**




## Brevard Beaches/March

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ally, Scott eliminated the lawn, filling the space with plants and mulch. Cars slow as they pass; some stop, if Scott is working outside, to tell him how beautiful it is. Almost incredible is *Normanbya*, five of them, perhaps 8 feet high, and ready to flower

**The second** stop was at Bud Wideman's in Cocoa Beach. Since his place has been described in some detail in a previous issue, it is totally unnecessary to dwell on its many, unlikely palms. The famous *Arenga pinnata* in his backyard, workhorse for the chapter's treasury, is almost at its end but the near-corpse was a definite sight/site on the tour. As for those lured to Bud's by tales of the largest *Livistona inermis* in Brevard County, possibly in the contiguous 48 states, his publicist forgot that this noted specimen had gone to glory some months back, faltering even under Bud's beneficent care. Several people took pictures of the remains. (A memorial stone, with dates, may be erected on the spot.) Bud is also the source of lignum vitae (*Guaiacum sanctum)* seeds; anyone interested in this blue-flowering native shrub from the Keys—which should have preceded the *Livistona inermis* long ago—can contact him.

**The third** garden was that of Steve and Cindy Rael in Merritt Island. While there were certainly other palms and other cycads to be seen, the most compelling sight--right there in the front yard—is a very large *Wodyetia.* Furthermore, the foxtail was just on the point of blooming. (This would make the second in our area, after Bob Grice's in Vero Beach.)

**More people**, perhaps 60, appeared at this third stop than at the two earlier gardens, for the plant sale took place here. As usual, the departing cars and SUVs were packed with waving fronds.

### AH, YES, THE 20-YEAR INDEX. . .

**The index** wasn't just missing from <u>your</u> copy of *The Palmateer* in March. Because of problems with format and too short a time to remedy these, the index wasn't included—at the last minute. It has been inserted, however, into this issue. Apologies to its originator. Questions regarding the index should be addressed to Mike Dahme.

## Gainesville, June 9th

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protection. While the extremely cold winter caused damage, most plants survived well. Rose gardens and a number of bamboos join the palms and typical North Central Florida azaleas, camellias and pines. Palms include a number of *Phoenix* species, *Livistona*s, Sabals, including a nice blue 'Riverside'.

**The next** stop is the garden of Merrill and Laura Wilcox. Merrill has been raising palms for many years and is well known for his hybrid work. Larger palms will be seen here, including a nice *Nannorhops ritchiana*. At noon, following the directions to Kanapaha will take you past a large number of eating places (on Archer Road). Gather again at Kanapaha at 1:30 p.m. Go through the yellow house at the entrance - let them know you are with the palm group to get the entry fee waived. Gather at the palm garden for a short ceremony honoring the French hybridizer Gilbert Nabonnand.

**Merrill Wilcox**, along with Dan Goodman, Director of KBG, will place the plaque, honoring Nabonnand's work, in the palmetum. After that, enjoy the gardens, which include, in addition to the palms, a large bamboo section and a rose garden with antique roses. Merrill has offered to take those who would like to go on a quick tour of the University of Florida campus palms. He can provide transportation to campus and back. While many of the past palms of special interest are no longer there, a number, including *Sabal causiarum* , hybrids (including *Xbutyagrus nabonandii*) and large *Washingtonia filifera* are worth seeing.

**See Gainesville Map on Opposite Page!**

*Underneath the* Normanbya*s at Scott Ward's, Indialantic, March: Marilyn Bachmann, Don Schulstad (left), Ray Hernandez (right). In background , the infamous Red Shirt—he thinks it's pink—confers with Teresa and Ray Gompf.*

Hyphaene—*which species?—happy at home with Scott Ward in Indialantic, seen at March meeting.*

*Left,* Phoenix xlaurae*, Gainesville. Below,* XJubutyagrus everettii *behind Laura Wilcox.*

*Below, Laura Wilcox gives scale to* XButyagrus nabonnandii *at Noel Lake's house in Gainesville.*

*Above, Merrill Wilcox's daughter in front of* (Jubaea x Butia) x Butia. *Left,* Brahea edulis x Brahea brandeegei.

# Some Interesting Hybrids for North Central Florida

**By Merrill Wilcox**

**Shortly after** arriving in Florida 40 years ago, I noticed the difference between the cabbage palms and the jelly palms (palmate vs. pinnate). Shortly thereafter, horticulturist Dr. Sam MacFadden mentioned that there was a highly prized hybrid of the jelly palm and the queen palm , produced occasionally by accident, which no one had been able to intentionally reproduce.

**This was** the beginning of my interest in hybrid palms. As a high school student, I had pollinated corn at Beltsville, Maryland, and now noticed that the jelly palm inflorescence looked much like a corn tassel, but with female flowers added. It seemed a piece of cake to make this prized hybrid. Now, some 40 years later, I know better!

**The number** of palm species available for us in north central Florida is rather limited. In addition to hybrid vigor, hybridization offers the promise of a larger variety of forms of palms that will survive and flourish here. John Kennedy has asked me to describe those hybrids familiar to me. These observations have been made on rather small populations; further observation on larger populations may correct some of these impressions. Many of these hybrids are quite difficult to produce; advances in tissue culture propagation would be very welcome. All may be seen at Kanapaha Botanical Gardens except **X***Jubutyagrus everettii*, **X***Butyagrus nabonnandii* **X** *Butia*, and *Phoenix* **X***laurae*, all of which we hope to plant soon. We know of no presently existing mature specimens of **X***Butyagrus nabonnandii*♀ **X** *S. romanzoffiana*♂or of *S. romanzoffiana*♀**X** *Butia*♂.

***Jubaea X Butia.*** *Jubaea* and several species of *Butia* and their hybrids seem to crossbreed freely and be entirely fertile. Interest in *Jubaea* **X** *Butia* was generated by its inadvertent distribution by Fairchild Tropical Garden over a period of several years. Pure *Jubaea* seems unable to survive in Florida; the FTG distributions flourished but looked distinctly like *Butia*. Since the parent at FTG was apparently not pure *Jubaea*, most of these hybrids have a lineage of less than half *Jubaea*. These quite variable hybrids are similar to *Butia* in appearance, but are larger and grow much faster. They are slightly cold-hardier and seem more susceptible to bud rot than *Butia*.

There have been failures of this hybrid over very shallow water tables, which brings to mind that the only flourishing *Jubaea* in the southeastern U. S. is elevated at the top of a berm in Anniston, Alabama (Jackson, 1998).

***XJubutyagrus everettii.*** This is my favorite hybrid. It is produced by pollinating the preceding hybrid with *Syagrus romanzoffiana*. It grows very rapidly; *S. romanzoffiana* and *Livistona decipiens* may grow as fast heightwise, but this hybrid is quite massive with large, long fronds and a quite heavy trunk and produced total biomass at a greater rate. It has been *Attalea* like (i.e., very large, stiff, upright fronds) in form until 15 feet tall or so, then the form evolves to look like an unusually large **X***Butyagrus nabonnandii*. The trunk is almost self-cleaning. It is cold-hardier than **X***Butyagrus*. The leaflets are singly ranked as in **X***Butyagrus*. The foliage is an unusually deep green. A stricta form (i. e., with stiff, upright fronds) of *Jubaea* **X** *Butia* is now reaching maturity; perhaps a hybrid that still resembles *Attalea* at a more mature stage may be produced from this specimen. **X***Jubutyagrus* is probably virtually sterile.

***XButyagrus nabonnandii.*** This famous hybrid first appeared in south France about 100 years ago (Robertson-Proschowsky, 1921), but this work went unnoticed in Florida for many years. It is produced by crossing certain *Butia* with *S. romanzoffiana* (unfortunately, *Butia yatay* does not seem amenable to crossing with *S. romanzoffiana* or other *Butia*). It is renowned in the nursery industry for its vigor and beauty. Among other things, it is prized because the fronds closely resemble those of the coconut palm, being very deep green with leaflets in a single rank. It is rather variable in form. It is usually, but not invariably, more cold hardy than *S. romanzoffiana*. It cannot be grown easily from its own seed, as it is at least 99.9% sterile.

***XButyagrus nabonnandii X S. romanzoffiana.*** Because of the sterility of **X***Butyagrus nabonnandii*, this backcross hybid is extremely difficult to produce. Charlie Raulerson went through many thousands of largely sterile seed to produce it. It has been considered by those who have seen it to be more attractive than either parent. The deep green leaflets are arranged in several ranks, as in *S. romanzoffiana*, and the fronds are heavier and thicker than in *S. romanzoffiana.* Tissue culture seems the only hope to produce a significant number of this hybrid.

***S. romanzoffiana***♀**X** ***Butia***♂I urge anyone who has a

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## Interesting Hybrids

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queen palm that is convenient for breeding work to attempt this reciprocal of Nabonnand's hybrid. There is a reasonable likelihood because of cytoplasmic inheritance that the resultant cross would be more like the backcross with the queen palm; it is probably the reciprocal cross that is describe as "plumose", i. e., leaflets in more than one rank, and appears to be somewhat self cleaning (Burret, 1940). The reciprocal cross is difficult for me because of the size of mature queen palms and the difficulty of growing them in Gainesville; but Joe Henderson and I over several years have germinated a small number of seed of this cross, of which unfortunately only one survives. I don't know of any existing specimens of this hybrid having character leaves. Recently, Joe and I have worked with several specimens of *S. romanzoffiana* which seem infertile towards *Butia* and (*Jubaea X Butia*).

***XButyagrus nabonnandii X Butia.*** This backcross hybrid is of less interest than the preceding one. It is of unusual form, having short leaflets, being quite upright, rather open, and pale green. It reaches a rather large size. It appears to be so sterile that most spathes don't even open.

***Phoenix sylvestris X Phoenix canariensis.*** This hybrid is more slender and graceful than *P. canariensis*, and has a bluer cast, intermediate to the typical *P. sylvestris*. None of these hybrids have been killed by freezes in Gainesville after 5 feet of height, which they may attain at the end of the second year because of their considerable hybrid vigor. This hybrid responds well to extra water and fertilizer, and enjoys shallow water tables. It may sustain significant trunk damage from frequent watering directly to the trunk. Recently there have been many palms represented as *P. sylvestris* that lack the blue coloration that I am familiar with; there would seem to be less advantage to using this non-blue form to produce this hybrid.

***Phoenix Xevae.*** This is a hybrid of *Phoenix reclinata* **X** *Phoenix canariensis*. This is a massive, highly vigorous, multiple-trunked hybrid, which stops putting out pups after about 10 years. None have ever been killed by frost in Gainesville. The fronds are intermediate in form between the two parents.

***Phoenix Xlaurae.*** This is a hybrid of *Phoenix reclinata* **X** *(Phoenix sylvestris* X *Phoenix canariensis)*. This hybrid is rather slender and graceful, being somewhat of the form of *Phoenix rupicola*, but with longer fronds which have leaflets in more than one rank. It suckers for the first couple of years, but the suckers all abort very quickly, leaving a single slender trunk. This hybrid has never been killed by frost in Gainesville, thus providing a small cold-hardy single trunked *Phoenix*. It may sustain significant trunk damage from frequent watering directly to the trunk.

***Brahea edulis X Brahea brandeegei.*** This hybrid is intermediate between the parents, having soft graceful leaves and good hybrid vigor. In our area it does not die suddenly and inexplicably, as does *Brahea edulis*. It is slightly more cold-hardy than *Washingtonia robusta.*

***Brahea armata X Brahea edulis.*** This hybrid is intermediate between the parents, having leaves of intermediate color, and considerable hybrid vigor. In our area it does not die suddenly and inexplicably, as do both parents.

***Washingtonia filifera X Washingtonia robusta.*** This hybrid is better proportioned than either parent when grown on most sites and might be expected to be more cold-hardy than *W. robusta*. Of course, *W. filifera* is itself better proportioned when growing in its native springs in Mexico. The Parkers (1) have demonstrated the amazing improvement in the vigor of the *Washingtonia* hybrid over the parent *W. robusta.*

REFERENCES

BURRET, MAX. 1940. Um caso de hibridicao entre *Arecastrum romanzoffianum e Butia capitata.* Rodriguesia 4:277.

JACKSON, HAYES. 1998. Personal Communication.

ROBERTSON-PROSCHOWSKY, A. 1921. Un beau palmier hybride: *Butiarecastrum nabonnandii*. Revue Horticole 93: 290-291.

1. Dennis and Lana Parker, Majestic Tree Farm, 9300 Laws Rd., Clermont, FL 34711, (near Rtes. 561 & 33) 352-242-9054, have mature *Washingtonia* hybrids

*(Editor's note: I am unable to insert the traditional symbols for female and male hybrids, so have indicated sex by letter.)*

Good taste is more a matter of judgment than of intellect.

**—LaRochefoucauld, Maxim #258**

*Familiar sights, typical activities, at the plant sale at the end of the March meeting, Merritt Island: John Bishock shows "how big" while Marilyn Bachmann roots through the pots.*

*Right, the bright green leaf of* Livistona halongensis, *from Cat Ba Island, off Haiphong, Vietnam. (Picture taken by Gary Dahme)*

**Can you** identify the palm below? A new Puerto Rican landowner recently asked our treasurer, Mike Merritt, this question. Mike was stumped because, appearance notwithstanding, the plant is <u>not</u> a palm, but *Carludovica palmata*, the so-called Panama Hat Palm, from which headgear once (and even now?) was made. The "palm" is one of several look-alike plants.

**The joke** played on Mike was once played on the perpetrator on one of his first visits to Puerto Rico. The scene is the USDA station in Mayagüez.

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A truly honest man never fancies himself.
**—LaRochefoucauld, Maxim 203**

## In Defense of the *Washingtonia*

**By Ray Hernandez**

**Before I** start my brief rant and "Ray-ve", let me state that I am firmly aware of the ire it will cause. Still, I will stay the course because after this is done, all of you, no matter how much you choose to deny it, may have a change of heart.

***Washingtonia robusta*** or "Skyduster" is one of the most ubiquitous, overly used landscape palms throughout the Central Florida region. Despite that, however, this common palm put down by many (you know who you are!!), is a true gem. I owe it many thanks, as it was one of the first palms I ever purchased. It was sitting in the Wal-Mart garden center amidst *Dypsis lutescens*, *Chamaedorea cataractarum*, *Ravenea rivularis*, *Livistona chinensis*, and some other "prettier" specimens. For some reason though, the inexperienced gardener that I was, chose the somewhat tattered 5-gallon monster and toted it home.

**It has** been one of the best decisions in my brief palm collecting/growing past. Think about what a novice, unknowing newcomer to palms like myself might have done. I could have purchased one of those "inferior" species and the results would probably have been radically different. Wouldn't a shade house grown young *Ravenea*, *Chamaedorea*, or *Livistona* planted in full sun look great after a few months of baking?!. You probably really never gave it much thought but defoliation can happen in summer time too. I could have planted the *Dypsis* in an exposed spot in the yard only to watch minor frost or a light freeze do some serious foliage damage. In retrospect, I probably would have lost interest in the hobby thinking that palms are just too fussy and difficult to grow.

**As it** turned out, I chose one of, if not the most, rugged palm money can buy. The rewards it gave me whether I watered it every day or once a month were the same, a new green healthy frond and vigorous growth. I began to think I knew what I was doing and, more importantly, came to appreciate what a maintenance-free palm is all about.

**Most central** Florida palm nuts find this palm unattractive because of its widespread use rather than its actual appearance. As a young specimen, this is a great addition to any central Florida garden not already having one. The medium green palmate leaves and cotton fibers are unmistakably Washingtonia. These palms are said to grow quickly but this is primarily limited to frond production. Last year alone, my *W. robusta* put out 12 leaves but the vertical change was minimal. This means you can enjoy this palm at or slightly above eye level for many years.

**How can** anyone dislike a palm that has cold, heat, drought, and inundation tolerance? When was the last time a *Washingtonia* got bud rot or died in a severe drought? So consider adding one of these amongst your *Livistona*, *Syagrus*, *Sabal* and/or *Phoenix* collections if you haven't already. They're cheap, easy to grow and it lets palm-growing novices know that it's all right to have one of these before buying that *Cyrtostachys*. *Washingtonia robusta* is a classic palm, proudly holding its own amongst palms. Perhaps because of this, you will grow as fond of yours as I have mine.

# THE LOST BOYS (Part One)

*(This account of palms 'n' suds in Queensland first appeared in the newsletter of the Palm and Cycad Societies of Australia, Southern Queensland Group. It is reprinted here by permission of the editor and of the author.—Editor)*

**By Daryl O'Connor**

**Recently I** had the chance to do some serious palm hunting in the north of our state. Having grown palms for around 20 years and lived in a variety of locations from Darwin down to Sydney, I had never managed to actually visit the most palm rich area of the country – Far North Queensland. When the International Palm Society selected FNQ as their post-biennial destination, I decided to attend for several reasons. The first, was that it was an ideal opportunity to meet many of the international members and make new friends. Second, it was a great way of seeing all of the best private palm gardens in the area and, third, I could catch up with long time email friends Mike Dahme from Florida, Dave Hopkins from Cairns and Mark Wuschke from Melbourne. Our intention was to do the official tour, and then continue on north, spending the next week and a half finding as many palms in habitat as we could.

**Prior to** attending we all received the news that there was going to be a $1000 dollar fee to sit on the bus and participate, even for local members. As this was more than any of us could afford, we thought the trip was over before it started. Luckily, Dave spoke to the event's organisors, including Bill Beattie and the committee of FNQPACA, who agreed to let us tag along behind the bus, especially seeing as we were all local members!

**With this** sorted out, we arranged accommodation with Dave and his wife Jo in their bed and breakfast at Holloways Beach north of Cairns, hired a Landcruiser and stocked up with lunch provisions and a large Esky. Our intention was to simply shadow the main group and eat our own food, without getting in the way of the paying tourists! However, things aren't always that simple…

**Armed with** a printed itinerary, we fronted at Flecker Gardens first thing on Monday morning. The local FNQPACA guides introduced themselves and then split the group up, before leading us around the gardens for an hour and a half. Certainly this was the first time many of the international visitors had seen many of the species growing in Flecker, and there were many oohs and aahs along with the odd twisted neck or two! After walking around on a sultry, humid Cairns morning, many were glad to hop back on their buses and cool off in the air-conditioning. With the buses honking their horns, we climbed up into our Landcruiser and prepared to follow them to the next stop – Rosebud Farm. Hang on…how do we get there? Follow the buses of course! None of us had any idea on how to get to Rosebud, apart from heading in the general direction of Kuranda.

**How many** red lights are there between Flecker and Kuranda? Too many…and we caught all of them, whilst the buses sped off into the distance. There was a general state of panic inside the car! I'm amazed at how much ground we lost whilst sitting at the lights. "Luckily there are big hills between here and Kuranda" I thought. We drove up to Kuranda, up all of the hills and still no buses. Surely we would have caught them by now? By sheer stroke of luck we caught them just at the Kuranda traffic lights, and then followed them into Rosebud Farm.

**We were** all greeted by Rich Trapnell who provided us an overview of the nursery operation, along with a description of his local climate and conditions. The group then made themselves comfortable in a grove of *Wodyetia* and settled down to a picnic lunch. We did likewise, washing down lunch with a few icy cold beers. All of a sudden there was a mad rush and people from all over were asking us if we had any 'spares'. Well, that was the start of something, and if we'd been sharp enough to figure out the group's needs, we'd have bought a few dozen and sold them to the hordes of thirsty palm people!

**We then** spent an hour walking around and looking at the palms growing in the shade-houses, as well as those planted out in the grounds. A massive *Corypha utan* was very impressive, along with many other mature palms. Rich gave us the lowdown on the Veitchia Foxtail hybrids and the Foxtail Veitchia hybrids, showing off examples of both, along with a variegated specimen.

**Just before** we left, Rich performed a ceremonial planting to commemorate the visit. A young *Veillonia alba* was the lucky plant, and everybody pitched in, offering suggestions on the best way to plant it. In the end, it was decided to 'just dig a hole and drop it in'. A few of the visitors helped out with IPS president Phil Bergman doing duty, assisted by members of Association Chambeyronia who added the New Caledonian touch.

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## The Lost Boys (Part One)

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**The main** group then headed back to their hotel for the evening, but we had more ground to cover as it was still daylight, and it seemed a perfect opportunity to find one of the more recently described *Archontophoenix – A. myolensis*. With a few directions from the local palm people, we made our way to Myola, an exhausting 5 minute drive from Kuranda. The palms were growing on the banks of a creek, in full view from the road. About the easiest palm to find in its natural habitat. From their general appearance, they certainly do look like a cross between an Alexandra and a Bangalow.

**On Tuesday** morning, we overslept, and arrived at the hotel to find the group had already left. Where to now? Head south and look out for a couple of buses near Mission Beach – surely if we look for palms we'll find the buses. We guessed right, and found the group at the Tam O'Shanter reserve. You can't miss 80 American accents echoing through a *Licuala* forest! The reserve was a truly impressive sight, and we wandered down the walking tracks for an hour or so before sitting down to another lunch out of the Esky, along with a few more beers. Again, we had to bat off several people, this time offering to buy our stock!

**The many** specimens of *Calamus moti*, *Calamus australis*, *Hydriastele wendlandiana* and *Licuala ramsayii* were very impressive. The *Licuala* totally dominated the forest. About this time, Florida member Faith Bishock wandered over and jokingly referred to us as 'The Lost Boys' because we always seemed to be playing catch-up to the group. The name stuck, and by the end of the day, several members of the main group were waving out of the bus windows and jokingly asking if we were lost!

**After lunch**, the group headed to the nearby town of El Arish, and to Terry Mead's 'El Arish Botanical Gardens'. Terry has a magnificent garden with several acres that have been landscaped with exotic species. Outstanding were tall *Pigafetta filaris*, *Clinostigma samoense*, *Licuala*s, *Calyptrocalyx* and many other interesting species including a *Dypsis decaryi x leptocheilos* with branched trunks.

**Wednesday was** a special day, a whole day devoted to Mt Lewis. The main group had been cut down to 27 people, due to restrictions on the number of buses allowed per day…. luckily we had our own permit. We drove north from Cairns for two hours, stopping half way up the Mt Lewis access road to wait for the bus. No worries, we knew where we were going! (There's

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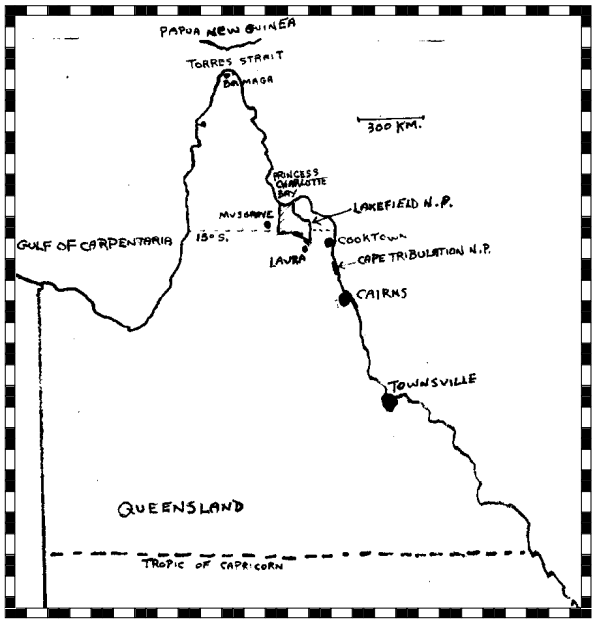
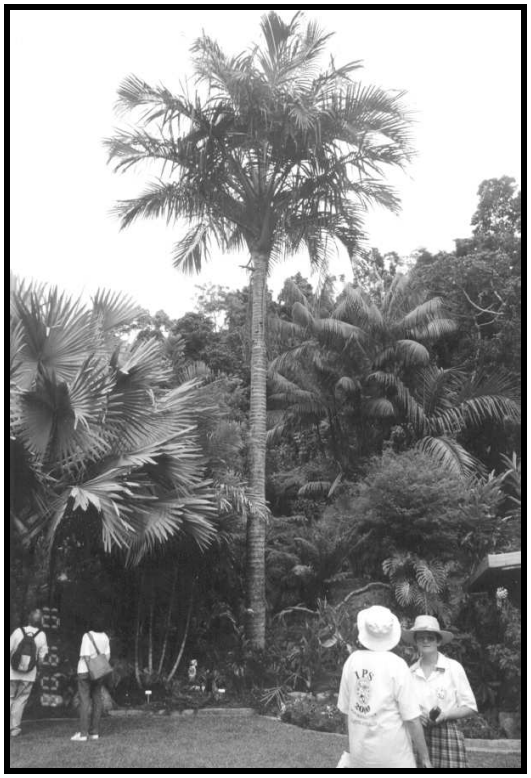



*Mike Dahme drew this map, on request, to show the travels of The Lost Boys, on palm patrol in Queensland, Australia. Brisbane is off the map, at the lower right.*

*Another view of Daryl O'Connor's backyard in Brisbane (see also the front page). There don't seem to be any* Corypha utan*, but these are farther north in a more tropical climate explored by The Lost Boys.*



Pigafetta *(probably* filaris) *about five or six years old in the Roths' garden in Cairns, Queensland. Below,* Archontophoenix purpurea*, growing in habitat on Mount Lewis.*

## The Lost Boys (Part One)

*(Continued from page 10)*

only one road to the top and it's a dead-end!) After waiting for half an hour we did start to worry, thinking we had missed the bus yet again. However a few minutes later, the FNQPACA boys turned up in their Suzuki 4WD. Rob Northey explained that the group had been 'Irvined'. As it turned out, Tony Irvine had indeed stopped the bus to show them some of the flora at the bottom of the mountain. For those of you who haven't met Tony, he is a wealth of knowledge, and could tell you the specific name of every plant growing in the area, along with a full description of its uses and peculiarities. If given free reign, he could have kept the group entertained for days.

**The bus** eventually came up the mountain, and we continued along the road, passing many stands of *Linospadix apetiolata*, along with *Calamus moti* and *Laccospadix australasica*. Eventually we came to *Oraniopsis* territory. These were very attractive palms, and far more numerous than I had imagined. We stopped a couple of times to listen to Tony, before we reached the end of the road for a lunch break. Again, out came the Esky and again, were the requests!

**The weather** was noticeably cool on the mountain, the midday temperature cooler than a mid winter's day in s/e Queensland. I can understand why it is so hard to grow *Oraniopsis*, you have to provide constant moisture and no heat. We finished lunch then walked over to a stand of very tall *Archontophoenix purpurea*, growing to perfection in the shelter of the forest. The group then departed, for the two hour drive back to Cairns. We took the opportunity to visit a local palm nursery at Julatten, at the base of Mt Lewis – TNQ palms. Although only a few kilometres from the mountain, as the crow flies, the climate is warm enough to grow *Cyrtostachys renda* and many other very tropical species. We were greeted by Jan and given a tour through her shadehouses and display garden.

**On Thursday** we made sure we didn't lose the tour buses, arriving at the hotel with time to spare. When they pulled out of the hotel, we maneuvered the 'cruiser in between them, figuring if we lost the first bus, we still had another one behind us. The Landcruiser sandwich traveled south for one hour from Cairns to Babinda, the attraction being three of the nicest private gardens in the Cairns area. The first was Kurt and Marie Roth's garden, followed by John and Chris Farrington's then Mark Daish's. Babinda has a higher annual rainfall than Cairns, lying at the foot of Mt Bellender Ker, and this was apparent with the natural stands of thick rainforest growing right into their gardens. These gardens were a

*(Continued on page 12)*

## The Lost Boys (Part One)

*(Continued from page 11)*

real treat, and contained many beautiful palms. All I can say is if you are ever in the area, try to arrange a visit with them. Mark operates a nursery from home, so is open to the public most of the time. We saw so many huge palms, it was mind blowing. Huge *Attalea*, *Mauritia*, *Corypha*, along with a *Lemurophoenix halleuxii* with 5 metre long leaves. These gardens left many people either speechless or demoralised!

**On Friday** the main group had some major problems with transportation to Mossman Gorge, missing their seafaring catamaran. We had opted to drive north and meet them at the entrance to the gorge, waiting for the group to arrive. An hour of waiting and we were wondering if we'd read the day's itinerary correctly! No sign of any buses, then Bill Beattie arrived in his van and explained what had happened. By this stage we were getting restless, so when the main group arrived, we took to the walking tracks and enjoyed the rainforest for an hour or two. Then back to the Land-cruiser to have our lunch and sell a few cold drinks to the other tourists.

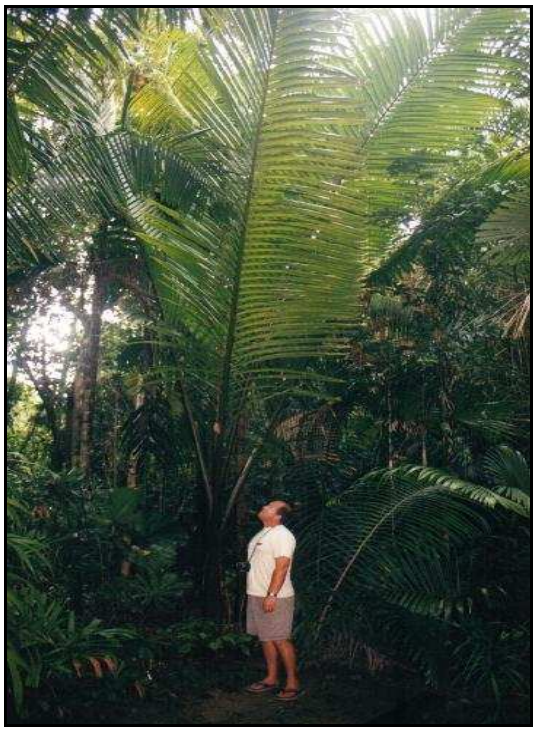
**After lunch**, the group headed to Arden Dearden's property, north of Mossman. Again we followed the buses, not wanting to end up in the middle of nowhere. A few detours later, the buses finally reached the property, having become lost on one of the back roads! Arden's property covers approximately 10 hectares, and the group wandered around for over two hours in the heat and humidity. There were many nice palms growing in the grounds, including a good assortment of *Dypsis* and other Madagascan species. A near perfect climate for growing palms, with *Licuala ramsayii* growing along the creek which ran through the centre of the property. After the tour, a few of the IPS group stopped for their customary 'drinks break' enjoying themselves before being hustled back on to the buses and transported back to Port Douglas for the night.

**We had** decided to spend the night in more 'luxuriant' surrounds, and headed north, crossing the Daintree river then driving to Cape Tribulation. We stayed in a modern backpackers resort, set amongst the rainforest and only 20 metres from the beach. Due to our late arrival it was dark, and under the rainforest canopy it was hard to see the vegetation. We walked down the main track to the dining area, had some dinner and then realised that the entire canopy was full of *Normanbya*, *Licuala* and *Hydriastele*! Next morning we were stunned by the beauty of this forest. All of the

*(Continued on page 13)*

*A young* Pigafetta elata*, probably two or three years old, in the Roths' garden in Cairns. Below,* Laccospadix australasica *in habitat on Mount Lewis.*

*The Road Not Taken: straight to the tip of Cape York, northernmost tropical Australia (which points to the underbelly of New Guinea). An unpaved road, graded once a year, that becomes impassable in the rainy season. The two American 'Lost Boys' wanted to continue on, but the two Australians ("city boys," the Editor was told) declined.*



*That's* Lemurophoenix halleuxii*—not an Australian native—with Daryl O'Connor looking up, up, up.*

# The Lost Boys (Part One)

*(Continued from page 12)*

*Normanbya* were fruiting and the ground was covered in bright red fruit. An absolutely amazing sight!

**We then** had a quick breakfast and made our way south to meet the group on the main highway, not sure how to find Geoff Fowler's place. Well, we almost blew it! The group had transferred to minibuses and were running ahead of schedule. We had just crossed to the south bank of the river again, when we realised that they were now on the ferry! Of course there was no room left for any more cars, so we had to wait until it crossed the river and then returned again. After waiting an agonising 20 minutes, we were finally headed north again, trying to catch the group before they took a side road and lost us.

**An hour** later, we arrived at Geoff Fowler's residence, a magnificent house set amongst the rainforest near Cape Tribulation. We should have stayed put in the morning as it was only 5 minutes drive from our accomodation! Instead, we did it the hard way, two hours driving and a ferry ticket to boot! Geoff's garden was stunning, as only it could be, in an area blessed with such a climate. Just way too many nice palms to comprehend. Many of the international visitors were just flabbergasted. Very few had seen *Pelagodoxa* growing through the decking, with fruit at waist height! All of the tropical palm treasures were there, blending into the surrounding rainforest. The surrounding hills were covered in emergent Normanbya, the red bunches of fruit very noticable in the lush green of the rainforest.

**By the** time we left, everybody was simply overwhelmed at the beauty of the area and of Geoff's garden. Later, we headed down to the beach and walked around the boardwalk, set amongst the *Normanbya* forest. The group had a hamburger lunch, and we bid them farewell, as we were now headed north to Cape York. We welcomed aboard the fourth 'lost boy', Bruce Barry from California. Now it was time to really get lost…

*(Our intrepid adventurers find more palms and more difficulties in "The Lost Boys (Part Two)" that will appear in the September issue.—Editor)*

# PALM GARDENING: A SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WAY (SWEATY, WITH PICKAXE AND SHOVEL)

**The picture** shows CFPACS member Sam Sweet resting after strenuous labor in his front yard. The problems of palm-growing in the coastal flatlands of Southern California are rather different from those encountered in Florida. Sam's soil in Goleta is clay that retains water and nutrients but also lots of salts; if the clay dries out, it becomes brick-like. The builders removed the original top layer of clay that contained some organics and packed down what was left into an 18-inch impermeable mass. Obviously, this is scarcely suitable even for weeds. To compound these difficulties, there is also a certain amount of rock and construction debris.

**What Sam** is doing requires determination, as well as a strong back. He's digging up the yard— in 12 square-foot sections at a time—and amending it. First, he removes and breaks up the top "soil" (which goes into one pile). Next, with pickaxe, he gets up the fused layer beneath, then breaking this up with a sledgehammer before sorting out the rocks and trash: pile #2. He digs down another 18 inches, pushing what he's loosened into the other side of the hole.

**At this** point comes the rest period (pictured). Sam adds two cubic yards of compost into each of the three levels he's dug into, mixing it thoroughly with the returned "soil." When he finishes this process, the bed is about 12 inches higher than originally. Each 12-foot section takes Sam about a week or so of spare time. He's done 15 or 16 of these sections; three more and the front yard will be complete.

**Is Sam** nuts? He admits it, but points to the fact that the palms really like what he's done. Behind him, on his right, are a few of the 21 *Rhopalostylis baueri* that he put in as large 5-gallon plants not even three years ago. He expects them to show trunk this summer. To his left is a *R. sapida*, only two years from a 5-gallon; a larger one with 2 ft of trunk is just behind, but out of view. In the scrim of palms are "a couple of *Hedyscepe*, three *Archontophoenix alexandrae*, five *Howea*, two *Laccospadix*, four small *Chambeyronia*, and various *Chamaedorea*, *Linospadix*, and *Chuniophoenix*."

**That the** process actually works is demonstrated by what Sam is doing in his backyard. There, he is trucking in sandy loam and piling atop the clay to raise the level 3 or 4 feet. The *Livistona spp.* seem to flourish under such treatment, but other palms (of the same species that have also been planted in the front) have not grown nearly as well.

**--John Kennedy**

# SEARCHING FOR *Livistona halongensis*, CAT BA ISLAND, VIETNAM

**By Gary Dahme**

**When it** comes to palms, I have, until recently, most certainly been listed in the first-time caller, first-time listener category. This might come as a surprise to those who know or know of my palm-crazed father. With acres of what I consider dense, verdant foliage surrounding me since childhood, it would be natural to assume that some form of botanical knowledge would have trickled its way into my head before I fled the scene. Negative. Instead, I probably knew less. All of this is to say that when I climbed on board the ferry departing from Halong City to Cat Ba Island, I had no real intention of acquiring any greater appreciation of palms. But due to the inherent beauty of the island itself, with the palms comprising a major portion of it, it was impossible not to.

**With that** being said (pointedly my severe lack of palm know-how), I'll begin the description of Cat Ba Island, which includes a description of the *Livistona halongensis*. To start off, Cat Ba Island is situated off the coast of northeastern Vietnam, about 3 hours via boat from Halong City, which is itself a few hours southeast of Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. While there are other ways of reaching the island, I've found that most people leave from either Haiphong or Halong City. The trip to Cat Ba was great. There are thousands of limestone islands scattered throughout Halong Bay, which is part of the Gulf of Tonkin, and to view them as you slowly drift by can be quite a sight. Most are very tall, shooting up from the water to various heights, and all have various types of foliage growing on them. Some of them also boast palms, rather small ones to be sure, yet they can be seen growing with tenacity on the limestone cliffs.

**The only** part of the trip I didn't particularly enjoy was the weather. It was chilly. If you're going to be in the northern part of Vietnam during the colder seasons, it would be a good idea to bring some warm clothes. As it was, I didn't think it'd be a problem and had brought only a couple long sleeves- I was wearing both by the time I reached the island.

**After a** brief stop at one of the larger limestone islands, where there was a large cave for all the tourists to take pictures, we eventually reached Cat Ba Island. I didn't know what to expect when I got there, and it turns out that I still didn't once I arrived. Cat Ba is littered with very tall hills, most of them 200-300 meters tall, and because the boat docked at the foot of one I couldn't get a good idea of what else was out there. However, after a lengthy hike up the side of this hill I was able to see Cat Ba Town. Cat Ba Town is essentially one long string of hotels/restaurants that, on one side, hug the sides of limestone hills and on the other look out over the bay where hundreds of vessels lie. It's from Cat Ba Town that one arranges transportation from and around the island.

*The hazy view from Cat Ba, limestone islands in Ha Long Bay, almost a scene from blue willowware.*

**Having arrived** in the late afternoon, and being rather cold and tired, I didn't do much exploration at first. From what light I had, however, I was able to see that in addition to many coconut trees, there were short fan palms and very tall feather palms growing within the town, both of which I'd seen elsewhere in Vietnam.

**The next** morning I and about 30 others left the town by bus and headed inland to the Cat Ba National Park, where we would begin an all day hike taking us through the center of the park and ending at a small fishing village on the other side of the island, near the sea. Before we reached the starting point, however, the bus made a stop where, if you paid, you could explore another, more interesting cave than the one previously mentioned. This cave housed many Vietnamese during the war, and from its vantage point at the top they would shoot down planes flying overhead.

**After the** cave and upon reaching the park, the guides separated those who were to go on a short hike, lasting till noon, and those who wanted the longer, full day hike. As I thought that the best way to find this palm would be to see as much of the island as possible, I vouched for the full day hike. At this point, however, I was already regretting this decision as, along with no warm clothes, I also didn't bring any hiking boots. In fact, being under the impression that the palm wouldn't require hiking to reach, I had brought only sandals to the island.

**Well, the** hike started, and I soon forgot (though that would change) about not bringing shoes. From the onset I was amazed at how beautiful the park was.

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## *Livistona halongensis*

*(Continued from page 15)*

There were many different types of plants to be seen, and from the occasional rest breaks, usually taken on the sides of the hills, you could see the sides of hills opposite yours and realize just how green and pristine everything was. This was especially apparent to me as I had spent the previous months living in Saigon, where it's not clean and there's little green you would like to walk near.

**What was** truly surprising, however, and it wasn't until after the hike that I realized it, was that despite the impressive forest habitat, neither I nor any others on the hike saw or heard any animals. I learned later that very few people do see animals, as many of the fauna, most especially monkeys, have for years been stolen at night to be sold in China, among other places. I was further surprised to learn that the same had been happening to palms. At one rest break I had asked our guide about the lack of palms growing near the beaten path, to which he explained that they had all been taken, oftentimes by tourists like us, while walking along the hiking trails. Now, of course, taking flora and fauna from the island has become illegal, but the damage has been done and can be seen if you look for it.

**The hike** continued and, while I would catch a glimpse of the occasional palm, none of them fit the description of the *Livistona* I meant to find. After about three hours I voiced my concern to a friendly Swede by the name of Mans, who had happily taken it upon himself to help me find this elusive tree. That the hiking group wasn't stopping during the hike also added to the difficulty. Yet around early afternoon, while we were hiking horizontally across a hill with a steep valley far below us to the right, we spotted the distant shape of a large palm growing on the far side of the valley. It must have been very tall to even catch our eye, but spot it we did. Upon closer inspection, however, it turned out that it was a feather palm, not a fan and hence not the *Liv.* Despite this, however, we decided to take a closer look and grab some pictures if possible.

**While the** group marched on in front of us, we turned away from the path and began walking down the steep hillside toward the valley below. Unfortunately, after about 10 minutes of forcing our way through underbrush, we found that even if we could get through the foliage, the hillside was becoming far too steep to safely reach the bottom and we decided to turn back. Once at the trail again, we looked for other ways to reach the distant palms, but finding no such route due to the near overwhelming walls of green, we turned around and hurriedly sought to catch up with the rest of the group. The group, it turned out, was grateful for the 20-minute rest break we provided.

**After this** failed attempt, and realizing that if I hadn't seen the palm yet I probably never would, I decided to stop looking so hard and to appreciate the hike. A few more hours passed until eventually, tired and hungry, we reached the small fishing village. This is actually a misleading description, for as far as I could tell there were no fish to be seen. But the enormous valley that contained the village was breathtaking. It was enclosed on all sides with some of the tallest hills I'd seen so far, some of them wreathed in mist and all of them covered with dense foliage. I didn't take much time to stare at them, though, as dinner was being served.

**Afterwards, Mans** and I asked one of the locals, who miraculously spoke a bit of English, about the *Livistona* we were after. As I had seen no sign of the palm all day, I didn't think anything would come of this, and even when the fellow began to emphatically nod his head and gesture for us to follow, did I feel much hope. So I was certainly surprised when, upon stepping outside and following his pointing finger, I saw straddling the peaks of the hills far above us the distant figures of what appeared to be palm trees. Even though they were much too far away to be seen clearly, let alone spot the signifying inflorescences, I was nevertheless happy and wanted to take a closer look if possible. Although it was possible, it turned out that there wasn't enough light left to make it there and return.

**So, despite** the dread of another hike in sandals, I told the locals I'd come back the following day. Soon the group left the fishing village, where after an hour's hike we'd reach the boat. The sights on this last leg were truly splendid. The majority of it took us through the bottom of a winding inland bay of sorts, where towering walls of limestone rose to enclose the crystal green waters of the narrow bay itself. Not a few people cut themselves while traversing the rocky shores, and in fact one girl had to be "hurried" to the boat due to a nasty fall she took. Finally, we reached the boat, where I basked in the knowledge that I had retained all use of limbs and vitals. By the time the boat had left, it was already getting dark, and by the time we reached the town, about an hour's journey, it was night.

**That night**, while at one of the numerous restaurant bars, I had a chat with a friendly Vietnamese man. After answering the inevitable questions from him, I got around to asking if he knew anything about the *Livistona* palm. After describing it to him, he became very animated and told me, yes, he did know this palm, and added that there were many that grew in places much easier to access than the fishing village. This, of

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## *Livistona halongensis*

*(Continued from page 16)*

course, made me exceedingly happy, as any opportunity of getting close to one without another day long hike was to be supported.

**I therefore** began asking many questions pertaining to his knowledge of this palm. It turned out that he knew quite a bit more than other locals I had spoken to (who knew what a palm tree was but not much more than that, not so different from me) although he didn't recognize the inflorescence that I drew. I eventually setup a private guide through him and would leave the next day to check out the palms.

**The following** morning dawned chilly (in the 60's), and with the mist which rolled in off the adjacent bay I was fairly cold. I remembered thinking about how palms could live in such weather, especially for the *Livistona halongensis* which, from what I'd seen, grows on the very tops of the hills. My guide was a talkative guy named Lam, who was a friend of the man I met last night, and we soon hopped on a motorbike and set off. But not before he had found a jacket for me to wear, which I was to be very thankful for. The ride was very cold, and by the time we reached our destination my hands and face were more or less numb.

**Our destination** was, in fact, the same place that yesterday's hike began, in the headquarters of Cat Ba National Park. I was also surprised that we were to be using the other hiking trail, which while supposedly shorter was also said to be much steeper. This was, indeed, the case. The good part was that I wasn't cold any more, rather the opposite. For about an hour we hiked upwards, all the while Lam pointing out interesting items and describing their uses. Some were very cool; for example, he showed me a tree that was used to make poison detecting chop sticks, which would turn food a greenish color if it contained poison. Though I was skeptical, I did end up buying a pack of them later. Upwards we walked, and eventually we took a separate path that veered sharply from the hiking trail. This path almost immediately took us up the severe rocky sides of the hill, sometimes requiring the use of ladders that were built into the walls for such a purpose.

**Up and** up we went, until finally after one more climb we were standing on a relatively flat terrain with absolutely nothing impeding our view in all directions. This view was one of the most spectacular I'd ever seen. From our vantage point, some 250 meters above the park headquarters, mist shrouded green hills encompassed the island as far as the eye could see. The gently rounded tops of the hills reminded me so much of pictures I'd seen of Peru that I found it difficult to believe I was on an island, albeit one with 200 square kilometers of land.

**After I** had taken in this view for a few minutes, we felt rested enough to carry on. But before doing so, Lam shifted my attention somewhat ahead of us and to the right where, near the top of the same hill upon which we stood, grew a *Livistona halongensis*. As this was the first time I had looked upon a palm with something other than detached curiosity, I distinctly remember that sight. With the combination of the palm's long inflorescences, which grew outwards in all directions, and the stunning scenery that surrounded it, the *halongensis* came off as being a truly unique palm.

**After snapping** off some photos of the palm, I caught up to Lam who had walked a bit further along until he was standing on the opposite side of the hill top. Peering downwards, I could see a group of the palms, some 5 or 6 of them, growing together, though these, unfortunately, were out of reach. Many more pictures were taken, during which I asked Lam why it was these palms only grew on the tops of these hills. To this he had no answer, but he guessed that it was to make our life more difficult.

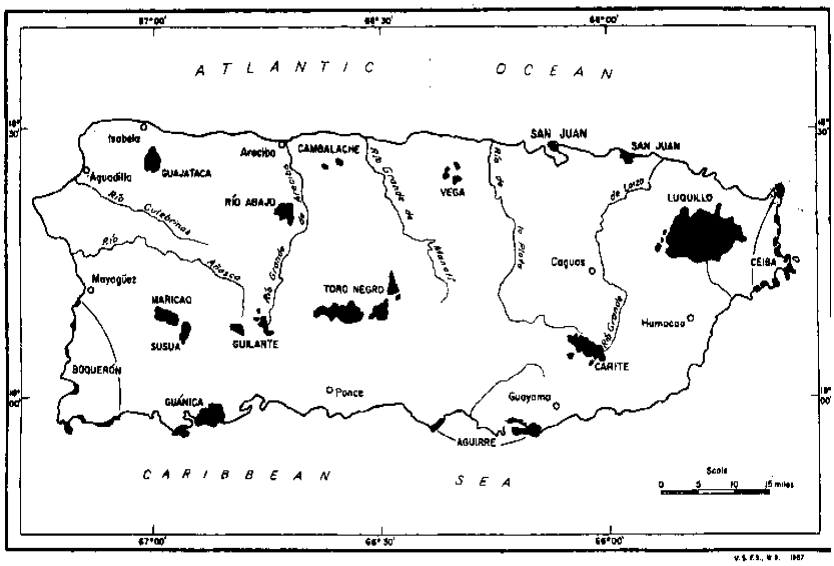
**We spent** an hour or so visiting those palms that were accessible, which turned out to be very few. And despite our efforts, at none of them did we find any evidence of seeds either above ground or digging at their bases. Reluctantly, far after I had exhausted my supply of film, we decided to make our way back to the park headquarters and from there back to Cat Ba Town.

**The next** couple of days were spent exploring the rest of the island, separated conveniently into four regions of east, west, north and south. To those who wish to visit the island, I definitely recommend either renting a motorbike or hiring someone to take you around the island, as each region has its own distinctive style and feeling to it. And I do recommend visiting if it's possible, as even though the island is for the most part untouched by the more distinguishable characteristics of modern civilization, that is changing, and unfortunately even those who were born and raised on the island welcome this change. For now, however, the island still retains much of its past charm, if not its mystery, and is well worth a visit or two.

# A Hobbyist's Tour of the Palms of Puerto Rico

**By Mike Merritt**

**I originally** became interested in palms because I was interested in obtaining plants that had an interesting and unique appearance that would make them interesting additions to my landscaping. Perhaps because of my scientific background in a non-botanical field, I later became interested in the details of differences between species and genera and other botanical aspects, but much of my interest in palms remains related to the aesthetic appeal and unique character of individual species. So my viewpoint is that of an informed hobbyist and gardener rather than a botanist as I describe my experiences when, in March 2001, I accepted an invitation to travel to Puerto Rico and spend a week of palm exploration as the guest of fellow chapter member Mike Dahme.




*Map of Puerto Rico, showing the public forests.*

**Mike owns** a multi-acre property in the mountainous middle of the island, in the Central Cordillera. The house is at about 2,400 feet elevation, surrounded by steep hillsides and deep ravines. The climate in March was cool (the daily temperature range was about 56 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit), but frosts and freezes are unheard of at this latitude and elevation. It didn't rain during my week, but annual rainfall in the mountains can range from 60 to 100 inches, depending on location. The hills (volcanic remnants of Cretaceous Era mountain building) are rocky, which helps them to hold up under all this precipitation. The rocks break down to a heavy yellow clayey soil.

**Bananas, mangos**, oranges, and African tulip trees grow wild in profusion on Mike's property, as everywhere in the populated mountains. There are numerous narrow but well-paved roads throughout the Central Cordillera. Most follow ridgelines between valleys, so that houses along the road typically have spectacular views of surrounding valleys and adjacent hillsides. These country houses are numerous but not crowded everywhere outside public lands, and some are quite luxurious. The landscape of this region is very vertical, a dramatic visual departure for a long-time Floridian used to flat vistas. This also means that moving around requires some effort – a short walk on Mike's property may require a climb or descent of 100 feet or more, followed by the reverse procedure.

**There are** several Commonwealth Forests in the Central Cordillera, as well as in the northwest and along the southern coast. The best known forest in Puerto Rico is the federally-operated Caribbean National Forest in the Luquillo Mountains, or Eastern Mountains, near the eastern tip of the island. Mike and I visited two forests near the center of the island, Guilarte and Toro Negro. Each of these has a network of hiking (climbing) trails, some of which lead to observation towers that offer views of large parts of the island and of the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea. There were only a few other visitors when we were there. It was in these forests that we encountered the first species to be discussed.

***Prestoea acuminata*** (formerly *montana*), the Mountain Palm or Sierra Palm, Palma de sierra.

**This palm** is restricted to the upper mountain forest, where it dominates. It is believed that this palm may have once covered the upper elevations of much of the island, but centuries of slash-and-burn clearing of hillsides since the Spanish settlement have eliminated all but a few outside the Commonwealth and federal park systems. Where we found it in the parks, the species blanketed hillsides and valleys for a considerable dis-

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## Puerto Rican Palms

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tance – though its range has been considerably restricted, the mountain palm is not a threatened species in Puerto Rico. In addition, the species is found throughout the Antilles, much of Central America, and in the Andes of South America. In some localities it is a clustering species, but the Puerto Rican form has a single trunk. The species may also have occurred at lower elevations in Puerto Rico before man's influence, and does occur at lower elevations in other parts of its range.

**In general** appearance (see photo insert), the Puerto Rican mountain palm resembles a small coconut. The leaves have a similar graceful appearance, with many long, stiff, pointed leaflets, but the crown as a whole is smaller. The seedlings sprout in shade or filtered light on the steep clayey hillsides. When the stems extend high enough that the crowns emerge from the canopy, the palms begin to produce flowers and seeds. **Ultimately, some** of the stems may reach 50 or 60 feet in height. There doesn't seem to be a fixed season for flowering. When I climbed to the Toro Negro observation tower, palms about mid-elevation were flowering and seeding; those above and below were not. **I personally** would consider the mountain palm of Puerto Rico to be a prime candidate for space in anyone's garden because of its striking appearance. There might be questions concerning its elevation requirements and its sensitivity to heat, as well as cold. But Mike Dahme and another chapter member in the Melbourne area each have a fair-sized specimen growing in a shady location that has not suffered from any of the cold weather occurring in the last 5 to 6 years. Mike warns against overfertilizing. They probably require shade, and seedlings should be protected from direct sunlight. I have had seeds germinate readily, but have not yet been successful with raising the seedlings.

***Calyptronoma rivalis,*** Palma manaca

**We drove** to a location between San Sebastian and Lares in the northwestern part of the island and walked a short distance to a small marshy stream, where there were seven individuals of this species. This location is the type locality, where many more individuals were to be found in earlier decades. The area is undergoing development and a large house was under construction a short distance away. *C. rivalis* is said to have been found at two other locations in Puerto Rico, but it is considered threatened because of its small numbers on the island. However, it also found on Hispaniola, where it is more common.

**A riverbank** is the typical habitat of this species, as the name implies. I found the palm to be quite attractive and imposing in its appearance (the photo insert above is of a specimen in the Rio Piedras botanical garden), well worth the effort of a palm gardener. The numerous pinnate leaves are long and held above the horizontal, with long drooping leaflets. This palm can reach 30 to 40 feet in height, but we saw none much taller than 15 feet, including the many individuals planted at the Rio Piedras botanical garden outside San Juan. The seeds are tiny, and I have had no luck getting them to germinate, possibly because their viability might be short-lived.

*Gaussia attenuata*, Mogote palm, Palma de lluvia

**This palm**, endemic to Puerto Rico and found nowhere else, is a species of the limestone hills (mogotes) of the north-central part of the island. We drove along the northern highway, Hwy. 22, and in the distance on the crests of the hills could see small groups (5 to 8) of these very tall (40-foot plus), slender palms with small crowns towering above the surrounding vegetation. Access from the highway is no longer possible because

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## Puerto Rican Palms

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of new fences along the road, so we were not able to

get closer on this trip. On a 1995 trip, Mike did climb one of the mogotes to observe them. These palms tend to have exposed support roots at the bottom. Of interest is that Mike found small cycads growing out of the stilt roots. According to chapter member and Cycad Society vice president Tom Broome, these are *Zamia amblyphyllidia*.

**The smaller** palms (see photo insert of a 10-foot tall specimen) are quite graceful in appearance and would be worth having in a garden setting. The crown is rather small, having usually 5 to 7 plumose, erect to spreading leaves 4 to 6 feet long, with long, drooping leaflets. The 40-foot (plus) mature palms, with their shaving-brush crowns, would seem to be best suited to towering over the crests of limestone mogotes. The cultural requirements of this species are unknown to me.

*Sabal causarium*, Puerto Rican hat palm, Palma de sombrero (below)

**After finding** the *C. rivalis*, we continued toward the northwestern coastline. West of Isabela, in the somewhat dry forests on the hills overlooking the coastal plain, we began to see palms that at first reminded me

of the central Floridan cabbage palm, *Sabal palmetto*. The forest specimens of this species, which was actually *Sabal causarium*, are smaller and less well-developed than cultivated specimens. Many of the latter are found on the well-tended golf course associated with nearby (former) Ramey AFB. These imposing palms had massive trunks and substantial crowns of large costapalmate leaves.

**To the** best of Mike's knowledge, *Sabal causarium*, probably formerly widespread, is now found in the wild only here and near the town of Joyuda, south of Mayagüez, so it is far from common in Puerto Rico. However, it is also found in Hispaniola. Henderson has observed that *S. causarium*, *S. domingensis* (Hispaniola, Cuba), and *S. maritima* (Cuba, Jamaica) are very similar. In now bygone times, the large leaves were used to make hats, as well as other items, hence the common name. This massive palm makes an imposing garden specimen that does best in full sun and requires a considerable amount of space. It is relatively cold-hardy.

*Acrocomia aculeata*, Prickly palm, Palma de corozo

**On a** hillside across a ravine from Mike's house in Puerto Rico stands a huge specimen of *A. aculeata* that dominates the forest around it. While driving south toward Ponce on Hwy. 10 in somewhat drier terrain, we chanced upon several groups of these palms, again dominating the landscape. The species seems to be distributed widely in Puerto Rico singly or in small groups in relatively open habitats. Henderson considers the species to be distributed throughout the tropical Americas, but he includes local varieties that formerly were considered to be distinct species.

**The *A. aculeata*** (no reproducible photograph was available) I saw in Puerto Rico had massive white trunks topped by large crowns of leaves. They had the same overall proportions as a Royal palm, but the blue-green crowns were darker in color. The trunks had 2 to 6-inch spines along their entire length that were quite noticeable even while some distance away. Leaf petioles and rachises are also spiny. These imposing palms dominate the landscape like a Royal palm, are fast growing, but may not be suitable for gardens with pets or small children. These are full-sun palms, and some of the geographic varieties are more cold-hardy than others. *Acrocomia* seeds are notorious for their reluctance to germinate. John Kennedy, the editor of this journal, had one sprout after a wait of five years. None of my seeds have sprouted yet, but I've only waited six months.

*(Continued on page 21)*

## Puerto Rican Palms

*(Continued from page 20)*

*Aiphanes minima* (formerly acanthophylla), Ruffle palm, Palma de coyor

**We didn't** see any of this humid forest species during our travels, but did see a number of specimens in the Rio Piedras botanical garden on the outskirts of San Juan. *Aiphanes* species are characterized by their broad, irregular leaflets with wide, jagged tips, and by their spines. These palms are even spinier than the previous species, having spines not only on trunks, but also on the petioles, leaflets, and even in the flowers. They sprout in the shade of the forest and grow into palms with tall, slender stems topped by relatively small crowns as they emerge above the canopy. Of the ones in the botanical garden, those planted in filtered light locations had leaves that were dark green in color, while those in full-sun locations had leaves that were lighter green in color. *A. minima* is widely distributed throughout the Caribbean. *A. minima*, with its ruffled leaflets, is a unique and striking addition to the garden, particularly before a long stem develops, but its spiny nature requires consideration. It is cold-sensitive, and does best in partial shade when small. My *A. minima* seeds haven't sprouted yet, but, judging by my experience with seeds of its relative *A. aculeata*, raising this species from seed should be relatively easy.

*Roystonea borinqueña*, Royal palm, Palma de real

**The majestic** Royal palm is a common sight in humid environments throughout the island. As in southern Florida, it is used widely for landscaping. In general appearance, *R. borinqueña* is identical to the Florida/ Cuba Royal palm, *R. regia*. Various sources cite differences in the color of the flowers and/or berries as the species distinction. *R. borinqueña* seeds sprout easily and grow rapidly.

**Exotic Palms** Used for Landscaping

**Driving over** numerous mountain roads through the towns and countryside, it quickly became clear which palms were the common species of the urban environment, as opposed to the natural one. These can be divided into two groups, the traditional landscaping species and new ones recently introduced, probably by large companies operating from the U. S. mainland.

**The common** landscaping species encountered in the rural areas and towns were the Royal palm, *Roystonea borinqueña*, the coconut, *Cocos nucifera*, and the Christmas palm or Manila palm, *Adonidia merrillii*. It is likely that some of the Royal palms in use are *R. regia*. The coconut (Palma de coco) was probably introduced to Puerto Rica within a century of the landfall of Columbus. *A. merrillii*, a native of the Philippines, is now so ubiquitous that the Puerto Ricans have their own name for it, the Palma pequeña. It is commonly used to line street fronts in front of houses. Other exotic palms occasionally seen are *Phoenix roebelenii* and *Areca catechu*. The latter could be mistaken for a Palma pequeña but for its much greater height and straighter leaves. In a few places, we saw individuals or groups of *Pritchardia pacifica*, a native of the southern Pacific Ocean.

**The recent** influence of mainland commercial growers is found in recent plantings for large projects such as shopping centers and public buildings. These palms are *Washingtonia robusta* (Mexico), *Syagrus romanzoffiana*, the Queen palm (South America), and *Wodyetia bifurcata*, the Foxtail palm (northeastern Australia).

**The Botanical** Gardens

**We visited** the U. S. Department of Agriculture botanical garden outside Mayagüez. At first, Mike noted that several palms that he was accustomed to seeing were missing. After talking with an acquaintance on the garden staff, we learned that the director had been "making some changes", and the palms had been removed.

**Among the** large palms still in the garden were a *Metroxylon* that was dying after having bloomed. The unpollinated flowers of the *Metroxylon* had not produced any seeds. We also saw *Areca catechu*, *Dypsis cabadae* and *madagascariensis*, and a *Licuala* species (not *spinosa*) with divided leaves and orange fruits. There was at least one *Corypha umbraculifera*.

**Later we** visited the Rio Piedras botanical garden maintained by the University of Puerto Rico on the outskirts of San Juan. Here there were numerous plantings of native palms such as *Aiphanes minima* and *Calyptronoma rivalis*, but no *Prestoea acuminata*. There were new (to Mike) groves of *Neoveitchia storckii* (one

*(Continued on page 22)*

## Puerto Rican Palms

*(Continued from page 21)*

tree flowering), and a *Cryosophila* species. The latter caused some confusion at first because the divided leaf bases resembled those of *Thrinax*. Also present were large individuals of *Livistona saribus*, *rotundifolia*, *muelleri*, and *chinensis* (one double-trunked), and one individual of *Livistona benthamii* with its unique pattern on the trunk. I was amazed at the large vertical dimension of the crowns of these *Livistona*s.

**We walked** through a grove of *Pritchardia pacifica* and by a huge, thorny *Salacca*. There were at least two *Corypha umbraculifera*. We found clumps of two *Licuala* species with divided leaves and orange fruits. One has tentatively been identified as *L. rumphii*, var. *daintree*. The other is still unidentified. The most visually arresting group of palms was at the front entrance, a clump of *Cyrtostachys renda*, all stems being solid red in color. Also near the entrance were some *Pinanga kuhlii*.

**The labeling** of trees in the garden leaves something to be desired. One large group of a *Livistona* species (possibly *decipiens* or *nitida*) was mislabeled *Sabal causiarum*. And the labelers had an disturbing habit of hammering nails into the trunks to hang the labels. Mike has already exchanged communications with the garden staff over these matters. The latter have replied that they would welcome help in identifying some of the palms.

Acknowledgments

**My thanks** to Mike Dahme for educating me about the palms of Puerto Rico and for helping me with this article, and also for providing many of the photographs. I'd also like to thank Mike for 30 bottles of Heinekens. Or was it 50?

**I have** belatedly acquired a copy of the 1984 article on the palms of Puerto Rico published by Dr. Andrew Henderson in *Principes*, all my pre-1992 copies of *Principes* having been turned to pulp by the large tornado called Andrew. I used material from *Common Trees and Plants of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands* by Little, Wadsworth, and Woodbury. *A Field Guide to the Palms of the Americas* by Henderson, Galeano, and Bernal was also a helpful reference. This article did not deal with two other palm species found in Puerto Rico, *Thrinax morrisii* and *Coccothrinax barbadensis*, because we did not see them in the field or in gardens.

## *FROM CFPACS PRESIDENT*

**Ah where** to begin, so many new and exciting things happening … let's start with the website changes; our new address www.cfpacs.com now gives our chapter an easier as well as instant name recognition. It has quickly become one of the most popular of all gardening sites on the web. Major props to Webmaster Joseph Ayo for stepping up and taking over the management. He is on the lookout for "photo tours", if you have some interesting pictures of your garden that you'd like to share with others via the website please contact him; you can do so at the site. Also if anyone has a personal website and would like to link up with cfpacs.com please contact me and we'll get it done. All we ask for is a reciprocal link in return.

**Our seed** bank remains without question the most varied and successful palm & cycad seed bank in the world. We are receiving many new species never offered before, even unobtainable by commercial sellers. This could not be possible without participation from our members, some of whom go out of their way to collect while traveling. Let's keep it up.

**Very shortly** (maybe even right now) we'll have brand new membership flyers to hand out; if you're interested in obtaining some for your local garden center, nursery, etc., don't hesitate to ask. Contact Mark Van Antwerp, our membership chairman. Also for your added viewing pleasure we have scheduled an "extra" meeting this year, details in this edition. Since it is in Orlando, anyone is welcome to come across town and stop by my place afterwards.

**During the** course of last winter's freezes/continual cold wave a few members (about 10-15 of us) got together and nightly discussed via email the current events taking place as well as other ideas for palm gardening, cold protection, weather forecasts, etc. If you would like to be in on these discussions you could send me an email letting me know and I'll be happy to add you to the list. It's a great way to learn, compare thoughts and ideas and get this – it's free!!!

**Lastly, I** would like to remind everyone of the correct protocol regarding our plant sales held after each meeting. At the last meeting things got a bit confusing and once again people latched onto plants before they were actually available. This is highly detrimental to the good will that our chapter has normally demonstrated. Imagine how disappointed you would be if you saw that one palm you had to have only to see someone else walk right past you, grab it and hold onto it like it

*(Continued on page 23)*

## *FROM CFPACS PRESIDENT*

*(Continued from page 22)*

was the last slice of bacon at the breakfast bar … well, you get the idea. Now imagine that disappointed person as a brand new member who was just attending their 1st meeting. Not a pretty picture is it? At our next sale let's all take a minute (figure of speech, folks) to give everyone a chance to look around at everything; you'll be glad you did, and just maybe the one person getting the extra time at the next meeting could be you

**—Dave Witt**

## Seedbank Report: First Quarter 2001

**By Neil Yorio**

**The usual** seed shiller was on much needed vacation in Puerto Rico for the month of March, so the dutiful replacement respectfully submits the first quarter seedbank report. Numerous species of palms and cycads were distributed totaling a net gain for the CFPACS treasury of $1100.00. Special thanks to those who have generously donated seeds to our cause. Species distributed include *Arenga pinnata* from the precocious tree in Bud Wideman's yard (note that this tree has fully expired all remaining fruits-hope you got some). Lou Thomas provided seeds of the beautiful *Reinhardtia latisecta*, as well as wood carvings made from *Attalea cohune* "nuts". Fresh seeds of *Gaussia maya* and *Pseudophoenix sargentii* were provided from Ed Carlson of Vero Beach.

**Several species** were donated from Darin Yeatman, including *Chamaedorea glaucescens*, *Areca guppyana*, *Kerriodoxa elegans*, *Sabal* "texensis", *Trithrinax acanthocoma*, and *Cycas siamensis*. Our own Charlene Palm provided freshly fallen seeds of *Copernicia alba* from her heavily laden trees (much more of this one to come, folks).

**Of course,** Montgomery Botanical Center provided the majority of cycad seeds we distributed, species included *Dioon mejiae*, *Encephalartos hildebrandtii*, and *E. ferox*. First-time donator Betty Jo Yorio delivered a large bag of *Arenga engleri* from a large specimen slated for transplantation on aconstruction site. Finally, seeds of *Prestoea acuminata*, *Aiphanes minima*, two *Licuala spp.*, *Dypsis madagascariensis*, *Pritchardia pacifica* were provided from the vacationer in Puerto Rico.

| Donor | Species | Month | Amt. |
|---|---|---|---|
| N Yorio | Zamia floridana | Feb | $7.50 |
| L Thomas | "Carving" | Feb | 5.00 |
| B Wideman | Arenga pin | Feb | 20.00 |
| E Carlson | Pseudo sarg | Apr | 83.00 |
| D Yeatman | Cham glaucescens | Apr | 25.50 |
| D Yeatman | Areca guppyana | Apr | 10.00 |
| D Yeatman | Kerrio elegans | Apr | 17.50 |

**Total $168.50**

*(We have recently been told that a few* Arenga pinnata *seeds from Bud Wideman's palm remain and are available from the Seedbank Coordinator.—Editor)*

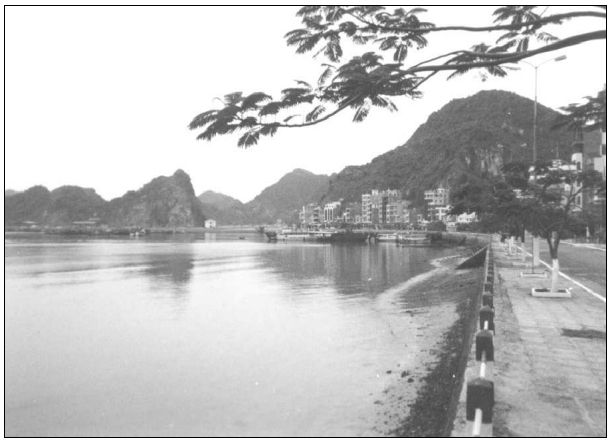
## Cycad Meeting, July 22 at UCF

**Chris Dalzell,** of Durban Botanic Gardens, will speak on, and show slides of, *Stangeria eriopus*. The species is threatened with extinction due to its collection for medical purposes. Dalzell will also explain the propagation of *Encephalartos woodii* from leaf base cuttings, as well as provide general information about other South African cycads. His presentation will begin at 11:30 a.m. on Sunday, July 22. There will be a BBQ lunch at 12:30, followed by a plant sale at 1:30. A tour of the University of Central Florida Arboretum cycad collection will start at 2:00 p.m.

**For detailed** directions to the UCF Main Campus in Orlando, go to the university's website: http://www.ucf.edu/location. html A list of nearby hotels/motels may be found there. For additional specifics, contact CFPACS secretary, Chuck Grieneisen. (See page 29 for his addresses.)

**--John Kennedy**

↓ *Cat Ba Town, Vietnam, locale of* Livistona halongensis.



# We've Grown!

## CFPAC's 24 New Members

**Since** publication of the CFPACS directory last December, the chapter has brought on board 24 new members. Fifteen live in Central Florida, with six in Brevard County, four in Hillsborough County, three in Indian River County, and one each in St. Lucie County and in Pinellas County.

**Bruce Abare**
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(321) 953-9727
postmanseb@aol.com

**Jeff Anderson**
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**Joseph V. Ayo**
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jayo1@tampabay.rr.com

**Roger G. Brumley, Jr.**
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**Thomas Brunner**
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**Rose Marie Croghan**
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Fort Pierce, FL 34949

**Michael Dunn**
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Vero Beach, FL 32961
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**Karen Geraci**
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drewg@mindspring.com

**David Herbert**
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dherbert@ircc.cc.fl.us

**Ann & Donald Krieger**
2345 Linebery
Malabar, FL 34950
(321) 727-1736
akrieger@brevard.net

**Arthur "Buck" Mitchell**
1435 Vega Ave.
Merritt Island, FL 32943
(321) 452-5318

**Sigurd Reeves**
3115 S. Atlantic Ave. #502
Cocoa Beach, FL 32931
(321) 784-1975

**Lisa-Marie B. Sanders**
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lmsanders@thehumandimension.com

**Tracy N. Tumlin**
536 Grey Twig Rd.
Vero Beach, FL 32963
(561) 234-2371
lovemarlen@aol.com

**Bill Vaughan**
1230 Silver Lake Dr.
Melbourne, FL 32940-1950

**One new** Florida member lives in Palm Beach County.

**Larry Dietrich**
Earthworks
2874 N. 162nd Dr.
Loxahatchee, FL 33470

(561) 790-3340
monstera@gate.net

**Five people** have joined from other states: Arizona, Alaska, Texas (2), and Michigan. If the name of the new member from Michigan looks familiar, it's because he is the brother of membership chair, Mark Van Antwerp. (There's a houseful of palms up there in Michigan.)

**Eric Anderson**
1532 W. 6th St.
Tempe, AZ 85281-3208
woodcraftman@earthlink.com

**Gene Doren**
Doren's Artistic Woodturning
HC 33. Box 3208-L
Wasilla, AK 99654
(907) 376-5056
gdoren@ivorynutpalm.com

**Henry L. Homrighaus**
6020 Avenue Q ½
Galveston, TX 77551
(409) 774-4647

**Lee Nygedder**
462 Sharon Dr.
Corpus Christi, TX 78412
adrenaline@swbellnet

**Paul Van Antwerp**
22595 Fuller Dr.
Novi, MI 48374

**Three new** foreign members are from England; the fourth is from Brazil.

**David Ison**
2, Fairwood Gardens
Burntwood, Staffs WS 7 3TA
England

**Kevin Maloney**
15, Derwentwater Rd.
Acton, London W3 6DE
U. K.
kevin@dmaloney.freeserve.co.uk

*That's Faith Bishock, under the* Bismarckia *at Scott Ward's in Indialantic during the March meeting, pointing out something of interest to visitors.*

**Paul Moloney**
40, Watcombe Rd., Southbourne
Bournemouth, Dorset BH6 3LU
England

**Ricardo F. Semier**
Rua Dom Aguirre, 438
04671-390 São Paulo SP
Brazil

**Remember, e-mail** addresses have a tendency to change, even more frequently than phone numbers.

**--John Kennedy**

*Page 27: upper left,* Cyrtostachys renda, *U. of Puerto Rico Botanical Garden, Rio Piedras; upper right,* Livistona halongensis *(center. in habitat, Cat Ba Island, Vietnam), with protruding inflorescences. Bottom,* Pelagodoxa henryana *as a patio plant, Queensland, Australia.*

# Prattle about Cycads

**By Ben Ciesla**

**The King** Sago (*Cycas revoluta*) is the most common cycad in the warmer areas of the world. It has many virtues; it is quite drought tolerant, it is attractive, it grows slowly, it is disease resistant, and does not take up too much space in the planting bed. It can stand quite a bit of freezing and is not at all hurt by frost.

**Among the** cycads, *Cycas* has the most primitive seed making structure. The seed head, or strobilus, shows the fuzzy, orange seeds attached to and enclosed in a primitive looking, globose, "stunted frond" head.

**There are** about 50 species of Cycas. In Australia (east coast), there are 15 to 20 species that look like *Cycas revoluta*, look like but have differences. This suggests to us how variations in species come about.

**Chamberlain (about** 1915), studying the cycad genus *Stangeria*, noted that it takes different forms in different areas. (This might apply to our "coontie"—*Zamia pumila florida* or its variant, *Zamia pumila Palatka.*

**In Vietnam** (and adjacent China) there grows an aberrant species (*Cycas micholitzii*) which has leaflets branching from the main leaflet to form "handlike" attachments to the frond stalk. Similarities in *C. siamensis*, *C. gothanii*, and *C. inermis* suggest a common relation.

**To show** how tough King Sago is, I used to walk my dog once a week in areas around my home. I passed a pile of dumped trash in which were but "cut offs" with green leaves of King Sago. About a month later, I passed the same place and saw that the "cutoffs" were still green, in spite of the dryness and lack of rain. I picked about a dozen and put them into pots; they "took." I gave them to friends and neighbors.

**A neighbor** had a ten foot (or so) tall King Sago. He was not a gardener and wanted it out of his yard. I had no equipment for moving it, so I dug it out with a small root ball. It had three stems, so I got four plants from it. When cutting and removing the plant, I noticed a few interesting things about it. When I "hacked off" the main roots, they looked like they went down very deep. They were two inches thick and had five annular rings (like in tree trunks). New roots (2 to 3 feet long) are formed quickly—two to three months—and are soft, white, and pliable, like noodles. I failed to note if the remaining roots sprouted. The cut trunk exudes a clear, gummy "syrup," but the roots do not.

**The father** of someone I know had a huge multi-stem King Sago in his yard. People offered him various amounts around one thousand dollars. When someone offered him $4500, he accepted. It was taken by professional people with proper equipment. Later, he was told he could have gotten $15,000 for it. The usual "after it's done" advice.

**My son** has a King Sago that had a seed head (strobilus). I took a bunch of the seed and pushed them into the ground with a stick. About a year or so later, having forgotten, I was surprised to see a whole parcel of King Sago sprouts.

**I once** read somewhere that cycad seed do not need pollen (apogamy). I'm inclined to believe this, as I have seen seeds on a plant without another cycad plant in the area.

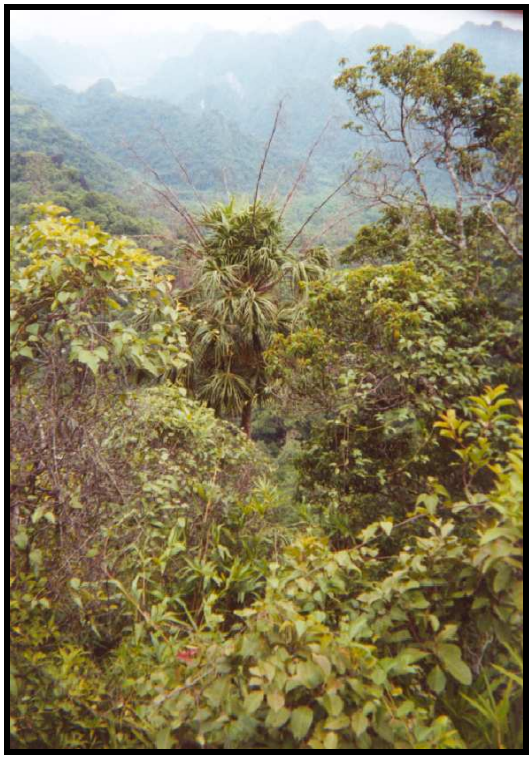
**Cycad sperm** bodies develop from the pollen. They are motile (move themselves). They are the largest known (300 microns) which equals 3/10 of a millimeter—almost visible to the naked eye. (*Introductory Botany* by Arthur Cronquist of the New York Botanical Garden, has a very good treatment of the cycads, pp. 390-97)

**The Queen** Sago (*Cycas circinalis*) the other, but less popular *Cycas* grown in Florida, has wider and longer leaflets. It has a drawback in that it is hurt by frost; freezes devastate it. It is native to south-east Asia. It bears long lived seeds that float. Perhaps that is the reason it is so widespread. In eastern ocean waters (Indian Ocean), a species (*C. thouarsii*) quite similar to it grows in Madagascar and East Africa

**The most** readily distinguishing aspect of the genus *Cycas* is the leaflet. It has a prominent vein running through its middle length.

**There is** a name (*Cycas taitungensis*) gaining prominence, perhaps in error. It is said to be similar to King Sago (cold hardiness and appearance). There is in the Chinese island of Taiwan, a town called Taitung City. It has a nature preserve with endangered *C. taiwaniana.* Both named are similar to our familiar King Sago.

*(Ben Ciesla is an 85-year-old cycad lover who provided this contribution at the Editor's suggestion.)*



*The Central Florida Palm & Cycad Society is looking for converts who no longer see their raison d'etre as custodians and keepers of the empty lawn. Fill that barren blankness with the beauty of palms and cycads. Others have already seen the light! No experience is necessary: we will train your eye! This fine publication will be sent you quarterly in time for you to plan attending the four annual meetings of the chapter around Central Florida (with plant sales, no less). Be a recipient of the bounty of our seedbank.*
*Fill out the form below or go to our website:*
*www.cfpacs.com*

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**Wish to be added to Seedbank E-mail list? (Circle one) YES NO**

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**Mail check made out to CFPACS (domestic: $10 one year; $25 three years; foreign: US$15 one year) to:**

**Membership Chair**
**4645 Canterbury Drive**
**Land O'Lakes, FL 34639**

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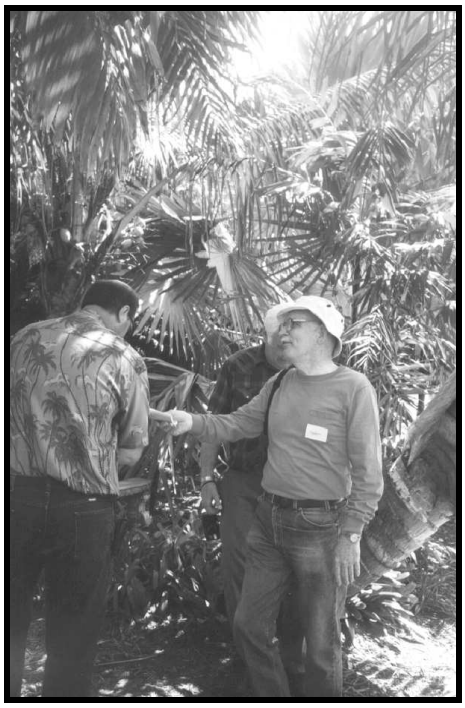
**www.cfpacs.com**



*Indialantic, March, a patch of palm jungle at Scott Ward's: the Editor makes a typically modest point to Tom Broome (back to camera), Merrill Wilcox partially obscured .*
*(Pictures of the Brevard meeting taken by Roger Bachmann)*

**The International Palm Society (IPS)**
**Anyone interested in joining the IPS and receiving the quarterly, illustrated journal, *Palms*, should send a check for $35 (regular membership) or $45 (family membership) to:**

**International Palm Society**
**P. O. Box 368**
**Lawrence, KS 66044**

**Dues may also be paid online at the IPS website, www.palms.org**

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# From the Editor's Desk

**Our meeting** in Gainesville takes us to my favorite Florida city, believed by many to be the prettiest town in Florida. Of course, there are so many un-pretty towns in Florida, notable chiefly for their traffic and their numbers of strip shopping centers. . .

**No, your** eyes did not deceive you: page 27 is in color , as *The Palmateer* takes a first, cautious (and rather expensive) step into color.

**You might** be interested to know that the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council (FLEPPC) has removed *Livistona chinensis* from its Category II list (potential threats to native ecology). Still on that list is *Phoenix reclinata* and *Ptychosperma elegans*. Maybe protests, mine as well as others', do have some result. Haven't seen citrus listed anywhere on FLEPPC's website (www.fleppc.org). Maybe we should point out the omission?

**Elsewhere in** this issue, you will enjoy the post-Biennial wanderings of the Seedbank Coordinator and friends. I was tempted to add a subtitle: "Beer Coolers Go to Mount Lewis" but, in the end, lost my nerve. Easily intimidated, I guess.

**The palm** spots that I was going to tape for Indian River Community College's public radio station, WQCS-FM (88.9) have come to pass. I've taped 51 in four separate installments. "I'll be famous, a celebrity!" I told my son, Matthew (22). No, said he, always willing to needle Dad, "you'll be a personality." I'm already that, I replied. I have 42 seconds in each spot in which to say something meaningful and very, very basic. The station manager has called the spots "Palm Points" and gives a little razzmatazz intro for each. I can't tell you when they run, since there doesn't seem to be a clear schedule. I've heard one on the air, #3, at 4:29 p.m. on a Monday (Monday and Wednesday, presumably). Didn't sound too bad, my Philadelphia accent not being too obtrusive. In the last set of spots taped, I suggested that anyone interested in the address of CFPACS or of the Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society could contact me for the addresses, or even the address of the IPS.

**My Sharp-eyed** Critic heard one spot (#4 or #5), thought it sounded good, and queried me about my intellectual ownership, foreseeing other markets (California?) as a possibility. My own horizons are much more modest, spreading the word, giving witness, from Cape Canaveral to West Palm.

**Note the** special, "unofficial" meeting on Sunday, July 22nd, at the University of Central Florida, beginning at 11:30 a.m. Chris Dalzell of Durban Botanical Gardens will speak on the cycads *Stangeria eriopus* and *Encephalartos woodii*. A preeminent cycad man working at one of the largest cycad collections in the world, he will show slides of these and other South African cycads. The schedule of events is on page 24. Chuck Grieneisen, our secretary, supplied the details and, for further info, contact him. Our chapter helped underwrite Chris Dalzell's travel expenses. Lunch, a plant sale, and a tour of UCF Arboretum's cycad collection round out the day's activities.

**In the** March issue, I complained that I could barely find any pictures to include. Devoted members and readers responded enthusiastically. I received about 100 pictures, some sent electronically, others as glossies, courtesy of the U. S. Postal Service. Obviously, I can't use every one, but I am most appreciative. A newsletter/bulletin can only operate well as long as members supply material for publication. Bless you-all for being so helpful.

**I've been** editor for three years—the term that I agreed to serve when recruited by Tom Broome and others. For the first year, the issues were uniformly dreadful, though each one was slightly less horrifying than its predecessor. I received nothing but encouragement and kindness despite my many mistakes. (As a long-ago junior editor on trade magazines in a major publishing company, I could see every mistake of mine—both before and after the fact--even when I did not know how to correct or to prevent it.) My basic strengths kept me going: as an English teacher, I knew the language and how to write correctly, as a long-time palm-lover, I knew enough about the subject to avoid major mistakes and to spot the mistakes of others. It's been a technological learning experience, with the Microsoft Publisher program and Adobe Photo Deluxe Home Edition 3.0 (the latter an example of user-unfriendly, stupid design). My computer skills have increased to the point where I can't report myself as a computer illiterate any more. Maybe, computer semi-literate. I am willing to continue as editor, beyond the term, at least until I get too tired (never bored). Sometimes, I've been frantic between student essays (the million words a year that I read in my job) and waiting for a contributor to send something that has been promised but hasn't yet arrived.

**If anyone** sees a good article on palms or cycads or

*(Continued on page 31)*

**Deadline for September issue: AUGUST 6**

## From the Editor's Desk

*(Continued from page 30)*

our members anywhere else (newspapers, magazines, other plant societies' publications), let me know. I can always contact the editor and author to ask permission to reprint. I've just mailed a request to England for an author's permission to reprint an article on cycads in Mexico that appeared in the European Palm Society's journal, *Chamaerops*. Martin Gibbons has already said it's OK (by e-mail, but not everyone has e-mail or—perhaps—doesn't wish to, though it has revolutionized Mike Dahme's lonely life).

**Dr. Andrew Henderson** is conducting his palm tour of the Amazon again. The dates are August 1-12. Information on the trip can be seen at www.nybg.org/bsci/palm_tour_2000. html. Overall cost, inclusive of airfare from Miami, is $3,035. If any of the Lost Boys or John and Faith Bishock are planning to go on this outing, I would like the story for *The Palmateer*.

**Freeze damage** from last winter is pretty slight at my house in Vero Beach (about half an hour exactly at freezing), but some is visible. The big *Latania lontaroides* in the backyard put up a slightly damaged leaf, as the first out after warm weather returned. However, the second and third leaves now opening have major damage. The small individual of the same species, about 10 feet away, exhibits the same pattern, as does a juvenile *Burretiokentia veillardii* in front. Now the *Dypsis cabadae*, all of whose leaves were totally browned, has put up several perfectly undamaged leaves. Good thing we all understand about palms, right?

**An unscientific** survey, that I took by e-mail, of a number of chapter officers and old-timers (experience, not age, folks) solicited opinion on fertilization during our current drought conditions. The consensus was a reasonable one: don't fertilize to encourage growth. Several thought that some fertilization was possible if the palms were in a regular irrigation system. We are all going to be participants in rain dances soon for a good rainy season. Some forecasters have said that Florida needs a couple of "good" hurricanes, though I wouldn't go that far myself, preferring a nice tropical wave or two in their place.

*John Kennedy*

### September Meeting

**Reserve the second weekend in September, that's September 8th & 9th. Plans are sketchy at the moment, but the Tampa area seems to be the locale and PalmFest the occasion. The September issue of *The Palmateer*, which should arrive before Labor Day, will contain all the details.**

## First Quarter Board Meeting Minutes, March 10, 2001

**The first** quarter board meeting was called to order at 9:00 at the residence of Scott Ward. All board members were present and others were in attendance.

**After reading** the fourth quarter meeting minutes we got the treasurer's report. The net increase for the period was $3286.

Our logo/artwork is still being worked on by member Jerry Hooper.

**The June** 9 and Dec 12 meetings were finalized. It was undecided about the fall Palm Fest .

Ideas for *The Palmateer* were bought up , they were a subscription expiration reminder and color prints.

**Outlining giving** funding for grants was brought up. Giving names for grants and levels of funding were discussed, along with the requirements of recipients.

Outlines for lifetime memberships, including qualifications were brought up.

**Interest in** including all E-mail members on various correspondences between members (like last winter's cold & freeze reports) was discussed.

**Gathering a** list of all members' E-mail addresses to link them to the CFPACS website was talked about.

It was decided to print up more brochures (membership flyers) for the upcoming Kopsick tour.

It was decided to make the formal announcement in *The Palmateer* of Chris Dalzell of South Africa's Durban Botanic Gardens will be speaking at U.C.F on cycads and all members are invited .(which CFPACS helped to fund)

**--Chuck Grieneisen, Secretary**

The Palmateer

Central Florida Palm & Cycad Society
3225 13th Street
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*An unknown, single-trunked* Bactris *in the Roth garden , Queensland. Post-Biennial visitors toured palm areas of the Australian state. Mark Wuschke (left), one of 'The Lost Boys,' looks up at the huge palm.*