The Palmateer

Volume 26, Number 1

Central Florida Palm & Cycad Society

March, 2006



Above, Montgomery Botanical Center in an aerial view lifted from the website. Put on your walking shoes, lots to see.

Spring Meeting March 11th Montgomery Botanical Center

By Diana Grabowski & Patrick Griffith Central Floridians, are you ready to experience a day of south Florida tropical weather? If so, mark your calendars for Saturday, March 11th for CFPACS first quarterly meeting of 2006. We will be spending the day at Montgomery Botanical Center located at 11901 Old Cutler Road in Miami.

The meeting will begin at 10:30 a.m., at this time the new Executive Director of MBC, Patrick Griffith, Ph.D., will give attendees a brief overview of the Center as well as the latest developments. We will then proceed on a tour of the garden focusing on the "Palm Walk" which forms the core of Montgomery's population-based research collections. The morning tour will last until noonish or so, at which time we will take a short break and have a picnic lunch on-site. The tour of the remaining areas will

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December Social Meeting: Good Fun, Good Food, 4 Gardens

CFPACS held its annual holiday social in Brevard County on December 10th. Members and the general public had the opportunity to visit up to four gardens from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon and from there members ended the day at the Grabowskis' in Cocoa Beach. It was a successful event and thank goodness the weather was perfect. The following are summaries submitted by the individuals who had their gardens open to CFPACS members and the general public.

Scott Ward's Garden (by Scott)

Several dozen members of CFPACS, guests, and friends of Scott Ward toured his garden on a balmy Saturday morning in December. Some hurricane damage (Frances, Jeanne, and Wilma) was evident, mainly on several staked *Syagrus* sp. and small palms, and

(Continued on page 4)



Bob Johnson Named Treasurer See Page 3

A quiet corner of the patio at Mark and Diana Grahowski's during the December 10th Cocoa Beach meeting. The auction is going on, off camera, to the right. Sea grapes frame the step down to the beach. (Photo by Claudia Walworth)

A new look is on the way for the CFPACS website, courtesy of Webmaster Frankie Ramos. The makeover is not quite ready as we go to press, but keep your eyes peeled. Some day soon. . .

www.cfpacs.org

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The Central Florida Palm & Cycad Society service area includes the following counties:
Alachua, Brevard, Citrus, DeSoto, Flagler, Hardee, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Indian River, Lake, Levy, Manatee, Marion, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Lucie, Sumter, Suwannee, and Volusia.
Please notify the Membership Chair (see directory on p. 25) of any changes in street address, phone number, area code, or e-mail address. The newsletter is sent to the address of record.

Closing date for material for the June issue is

MAY 12

March 11th, Montgomery

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continue after our lunch break.

The Director will also discuss the latest developments on the Cycad Savannah Test Plot Experiment. This is a project that our society contributed funds to in spring of 2005.

Montgomery Botanical Center provides an up close and personal view of an impressive collection of palms and cycads. Since 1992 the scientific collections have been planted according to a landscape architecturally designed planting plan, lending a unique beauty to the research collection.

We hope that many of you will plan on taking this "road-trip" down to Montgomery Botanical Center and look forward to a wonderful meeting.

The meeting begins at 10:30 a.m. Morning tour

- * Picnic lunch on-site (bring your own lunch and beverages). 12noon—1:00 p.m.
- * Afternoon tour continues after lunch break (1-2:30pm)
- * There will be no plant sale or auction at this meet.
- * Friendly reminder there is no collecting of seeds or plants at Montgomery Botanical Center!!!

Directions to MBC

Take I-95 south to Miami. Just beyond downtown, exit on U. S. #1 (South Dixie Hwy.) Go south to SW 42nd Ave. (LeJeune Rd.) Turn left on SW 42nd Ave.; drive to the roundabout. Take the second right off the roundabout to Old Cutler Road. Two miles down Old Cutler Road is Fairchild Tropical Garden; a mile beyond Fairchild is Montgomery, the entrance on the left.



Macrozamia moorei at Nong Nooch Botanical Garden in Thailand. (Photo by Lek Wallace)

Our New Treasurer: Mini-biog

By Bob Johnson

I moved to Central Florida from New Jersey over 20 years ago and currently reside just south of downtown Orlando. When I moved to Palm Bay in 1985, I was immediately captivated by the beauty of the varied palm species that seem to abound in the area. I thought I had arrived in paradise! (Keep in mind that I came from the Northeast at the end of December, so Central Florida looked like a South Pacific retreat to this winter-wearied Northerner.)

I picked up a copy of *Handbook of Florida Palms* by Beth McGreachy. First published in 1955, the cost in '85 was \$1.95, and soon learned about the native *Sabals* and *Serenoa repens*, as well as the more common exotic palms planted in South Brevard. It was not long before I purchased about a half dozen palms and cycads at a Melbourne nursery and tried my hand at growing them in my yard.

I did not stay at that house for long, but I drove by recently and was pleased to see that the Everglades Palm and a Canary Island Date Palm that I planted out of 5-gallon containers 20 years ago are still there. The Paurotis looks like it is over-pruned and is only about 8 feet tall, but the Canary is huge—one of the fattest trunks I have seen.

Over the years, the business of life and too many moves kept me from any serious gardening. My interest in growing palms and cycads was rekindled with the opportunity for a radical landscape makeover on our current property, courtesy of Hurricane Charley. In the months since Charley, I have planted about 40 different palm and cycad species in the yard, with many more waiting to go in the ground this spring.

I have also had to do quite a bit of work to change the drainage patterns on the property, building berms and raised planting beds to keep from hauling out the sandbags for each big rain event. (You know that you buy a lot of dirt when you call the local landscape supply company and they know that you want 15 yards of topsoil as soon as you say your name.)

My wife Catherine attends meetings when her schedule permits and has an appreciation for the varied plants that I am continually adding to our landscape. Our 5-year-old daughter Kiersten can always find a dirt pile to play in or a jungle to wander through, and can already distinguish cycads from palms (she calls the cycads "spiny plants"). I am fortunate that my entire family has an appreciation for palms and cycads. I have found the members of CFPACS to be very

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December Social Meeting, 4 Gardens

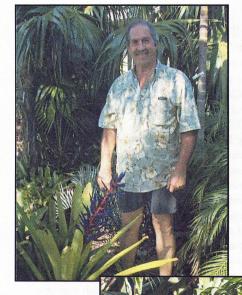
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empty spots remained from large palms that were lost in 2004 (Acrocomia aculeata, Phoenix dactylifera, several Washingtonia robusta, and two Caryota mitis). However, most of the palm, cycad, fruit, and bromeliad specimens had recovered nicely. Scott moved into the house in February 1994, and the grounds were lawn, thus all the plants have been planted since then. Many visitors commented that the huge Bismarckia nobilis had the largest trunk diameter they had ever seen, and mature specimens of Livistona mariae, L. decipiens, L. drudei, and Normanbya normanbyi drew favorable comments. Large specimens of Copernicia baileyana, Beccariophoenix madagascariensis, and Kentiopsis oliviformis were also favorites.

Flowers or fruits were seen on many palms including the three large Livistona species, Dypsis cabadae, Hydriastele microspadix, Hyophorbe lagenicaulis, Latania lontaroides, L. vershaffeltii, Elaeis guineensis, N. normanbyi, Allagoptera arenaria, Wodyetia bifurcata, Veitchia arecina, several Chamaedorea species, and several Ptychosperma species (P. elegans, P. salomonense, P. macarthurii, P. sanderianum, and P. propinguum).

Scott's cycad collection appealed to those unique people who have a special affection for these ancient plants. Of particular interest were potted blue *Encephalartos* specimens, and many in-ground plantings of green *Encephalartos*, *Dioon*, *Macrozamia*, *Ceratozamia*, and Zamia species. At least one plant in each genus had reproductive cones.

By sheer coincidence, several species of bromeliads



Scott Ward with bromeliad Aechmea fulgens x ramosa. Below, another gem, Ursulaea macvaughnii.

that had never or had rarely bloomed in Scott's garden were in full and magnificent flower for the visit (e.g., *Ursulaea macvaughii, Billbergia vittata, B. nutans, Aechmea fulgens* × ramosa). Blooms on most *Billbergia* sp. only last for about one week.

Our New Treasurer in His Own Words

(Continued from page 3)

helpful in sharing information on palm and cycad culture and I have learned a great deal since joining the society in 2004. I have worked in copyright administration for over 20 years, so I guess that qualifies me as a "bean counter."

I know Mike Merritt did an outstanding job as the society's treasurer for many years—he has left a big spot to fill. I will do my best to serve the society as treasurer.

-Bob Johnson

Neil Yorio's Garden (by Neil)

About 25 CFPACSers in total took one of about 3 guided tours of the gardens at Neil Yorio's house. This garden has about 160 species of palms, 50 species of cycads, and numerous other interesting bromeliads, orchids, and even a bamboo clump. Palm species that were largely admired were Pseudophoenix sargentii, Syagrus botryophora, Medemia argun, and a beautiful Wodyetia x Veitchia hybrid. Cycads to be mentioned include a young, but large Encephalartos whitelockii, E. sclavoi with a recent beautiful flush of leaves, Zamia

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December Social Meeting, 4 Gardens

(Continued from page 4)

variegata with an amazing amount of variegation, and a pair of coning Zamia lucayana. During the tours, Neil mentioned that this garden was in perfect condition having finally recovered from hurricanes Frances and Jeanne last year, only to have hurricane Wilma this year

Below, the Yorio garden. Were any visitors tempted to take a dip?

put a fresh tattering to many of the palm and cycad leaves.



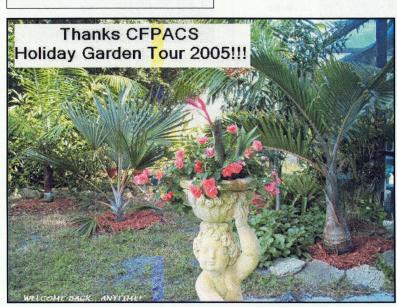
Charlene Palm's Garden (by Herself)

Below, a glimpse of Dave Reid's garden.



Above, a peek behind the house at 220 Ocean Spray Ave., Satellite Beach, gardened by Charlene Palm.

Due to recent renovations, our garden is now a combination of large mature palms and newly planted additions. The main attraction is the large Borassus aethiopum (now approaching 30 ft), some other mature palms to be seen were Hyphaene dicotoma, Coccothrinax argentea, Latania lontaroides and L. vershaffeltii, Sahal mauritiformis and S. yapa, Spindle, Bottle, and a beautiful Livistona saribus full of bright blue fruit. Some smaller but interesting new additions to the garden are, Coccothrinax borhidiana, C. hiorami, C. miraguama var. roseocarpa, C. miraguama var. havenensis, Dypsis ambrositrae, D. lanceolata, Pseudophoenix sargentii, P. lediniana, and P. vinifera.



David Reid's Garden (by Dave)

I would like to thank CFPACS members and guests on visiting my yard. It's not every day I get to be scrutinized by the finest palm enthusiast and having everyone over for a tour of my garden was special for me. Thanks for the gifts as well. I'm only jealous I didn't get to tour the other yards! Please contact me if you missed my yard and would like a private tour. I enjoy having people walk through my garden and talk about plants. David Reid damy5@juno.com

Grabowskis' Garden

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Scenes at the Cocoa Beach December Meeting



Dave Reed, left, shakes hands with Mike Merritt (celebrated treasurer now disporting himself in Hawaii) at his last duty station with the cashbox at the December sale/auction. Steve and Cynthia Rael wait to pay. (Photo by Chuck Grieneisen)

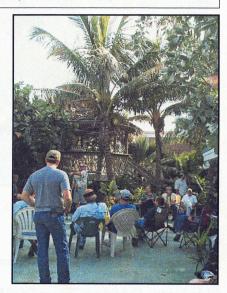


The **real** reason why all these people came (not the auction) but the plant sale that followed. The sale plants line the walkway. And, yes, that's Dave Reed checking out the merchandise. (Photo by Chuck Grieneisen)



Mark Grabowski, left, holds Queen Palm boot painted by artist Sonia Larson, right, who donated this for auction at the December meeting. Dave Witt, auctioneer, is at far right. (Photo by Diana Grabowski)

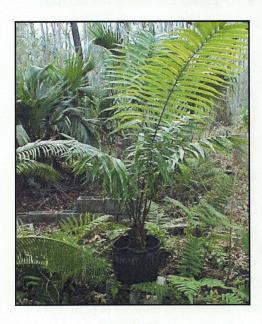
Plant auction beneath fruiting coconut palms on the Grabowski patio. Standing with back to camera: Ray Hernández, former chapter prez and Washingtonialover? (Photo by Claudia Walworth)





Ray Gompf, Mark and Diana Grabowski, and Chuck Wofford enjoy some refreshments during the meeting. (Photo by Maryann Grabowski)

GROWING CYCADS IN CENTRAL FLORIDA



Left, Zamia lindenii at Chuck Grieneisen's. Note that it is potted. Right, the graceful leaf of the same plant.



ZAMIA LINDENII

By Chuck Grieneisen

Zamia lindenii is one of the largest of the zamias. It has leaves up to 8 feet long and "trunks" to 13 feet tall. According to Loran Whitelock they don't begin to cone until they get 12 inches of trunk. Very large for a zamia.

I only have 1 plant of Z. lindenii. I have learned a good deal about them from just the one plant. Firstly, they like partial shade. I haven't tested them for cold hardiness, though.

What I learned mostly about them is the type of soil they like. I bought one with about 8 inches of trunk height from a guy in south Florida. I transplanted it into a very well draining soil mix that my Zamia neurophyllidia/skiinneri's and Encephalartos like. The Z. lindenii didn't like it at all. I kept it well watered but the plant's leaves declined. I transplanted it into a mix that was not quite as well draining. It still declined, eventually losing all its leaves. I decided to try one more soil mix. It was a regular potting mix right out of a bag. It was a (Continued on page 8)

By Tom Broome

Zamia lindenii is a very large and tropical zamia that comes from Ecuador. It can be a very vigorous grower if given the proper growing conditions. They prefer a good amount of moisture, and will hold their leaves longer if grown in a high humidity situation. They will grow to be much larger if planted in a shady area, but can survive in full sun once the plant gets larger. Full sized plants in habitat will have leaves that are half as long when grown in full sun compared to the shade grown plants. Zamia lindenii is not frost hardy at all, so growing them in a shady situation under large trees will help protect them. This species is not very cold hardy compared to most cycads, but is a little more hardy than some of the arborescent zamias. I would want to protect the plant is the temperatures were expected to get well below freezing, but I have had plants that tolerated 25F with no leaf damage when they were grown under a thick tree canopy.

The stems of many South American zamias will split
(Continued on page 8)

USEFUL PALM BOOKS AND WEB SITES

- 1 Broschat, T.K. and A.W. Meerow. 2000. Ornamental Palm Horticulture. University Press of Florida, Gainesville. 800/226-3822 http://www.upf.com
- 2 Elliott, M.L., T.K. Broschat, J.Y. Uchida, and G.W. Simone, eds. 2004. Compendium of Ornamental Palm Diseases and Disorders. APS Press, St. Paul, MN. 800/328-7560 http:// www.shopapspress.org [also on CD]
- 3 Meerow, A. W. 1992. Betrock's Guide to Landscape Palms. Betrock Information Systems, Inc., Davie, FL 800/627-3819 http://www.betrock.com [also on CD]
- 4 Broschat, T.K. and M.L. Elliott. 2005. Disorders and Diseases of Ornamental Palms. SP 360. This is a collection of plastic-coated, color cards (3 inches x 4 inches) with 45 photos of common disorder and disease symptoms and a short explanation of the symptoms. 800/226-1764 (credit card orders only) http://ifasbooks.ufl.edu (go to "Landscapes and Lawns", and then "books")
- 5 EDIS (electronic publication site for UF-IFAS information) at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu. Type palm into the search engine. Most of these publications are new, while a few are major revisions of documents currently available.

ZAMIA LINDENII — Grieneisen

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little better draining than a usual potting mix. The brand name is Light Warrior from Sunshine Hydroponics. The plant liked that mix. It made a flush of leaves that were about half the size of the ones that were on it. A few months later it made 2 leaves that were the same size, about 5 feet long, as were on it when I bought it. Conversely, I planted a large Z. neurophyllidia in the same soil mix right out of the bag. It declined, losing all its leaves. I'll have to transplant it back into the well draining mix that they seem to like. The Z. lindenii was trouble free once I found out what soil mix they liked.

Environmental Horticulture (http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/EP###)

- Nutrient deficiencies of landscape and field-grown palms in Florida (EP273)
- o Fertilization of field-grown and landscape palms in Florida (EP261)
- Nutrition and fertilization of palms in containers (EP262)
- Physiological disorders of landscape palms (EP263)
- o Boron deficiency in palms (EP264)
- o Iron deficiency in palms (EP265)
- o Magnesium deficiency in palms (EP266)
- o Manganese deficiency in palms (EP267)
- o Nitrogen deficiency in palms (EP268)
- o Potassium deficiency in palms (EP269)
- o Transplanting palms (EP001)
- o Palm seed germination (EP238)

Plant Pathology (http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PP###)

- O Ganoderma butt rot of palms (PP100)
- Fusarium wilt of Canary Island date palm (PP139)
- O Thielaviopsis trunk rot of palm (PP143)
- o Bud rots of palm (PP144)
- O Graphiola leaf spot (false smut) of palm (PP140)
- Pestalotiopsis (Pestalotia) diseases of palm (PP141)
- o Petiole (Rachis) blight of palm (PP145)
- o Lethal yellowing (LY) of palm (PP146)
- Leaf spots and leaf blights of palm (PP142)

Sent by Dr. Monica Elliott, University of Florida-IFAS Research & Education Center, Fort Lauderdale.

ZAMIA LINDENII—Broome

(Continued from page 7)

if the plants are grown too fast, and this species is not exception. I use the 18-6-8, 360 day Nutricote for these zamias to help insure they will grow as fast as possible, but without the stems splitting open. Zamia lindenii is a very beautiful cycad, and is worth growing if you have a good microclimate, but most locations here in central Florida might be a little too cold for this species. They are fairly rare, but there are a few people here in Florida that have them available for sale from time to time.

Dent Smith, The Palm Man

[Our thanks to the author, who contacted your Editor, and to Donald Gaby, editor of Halifax Herald, publication of the Halifax Historical Society in Daytona Beach, who gave permission for reprinting. This article appeared in the Winter, 2005 issue.]

By William E. O'Connor

This is a tale of a man, Dent Smith, who, at his premises in Daytona Beach (four acres on the Halifax River) built up a large collection of different species of palm trees. He also founded a society of palm lovers which today has a membership of over 2,000, including many in Europe, Asia, and Australia. It describes itself as "an organization devoted to the study of palms, their propagation, culture, conservation, and care and development".¹ It holds biennial conventions both in the United States and foreign points, and publishes a quarterly journal with worldwide circulation. This journal accepts articles from nursery owners and hobbiest gardeners, but is also used by botanists in universities as a professional journal with scientific details about known and newly identified species.

Dent Smith was born in Staunton, Virginia in 1897, studied briefly at Auburn University, enlisted in the Army in 1915 at the age of 18, and served for seven years, rising to the rank of first sergeant. In 1921 he married Guadalupe Martinez, and they were together until her death in 1973.²

In 1923, he became a bond salesman and, by 1929, had established his own brokerage firm. Despite the Great Depression, he managed to make what was apparently a substantial amount of money dealing in bonds of defunct railroads and interurban rail systems. His explanation was that "A great many of the owners of the bonds in these companies failed to realize their value. Actually the bonds often represented real estate worth a great deal of money. Stockholders were washed out when the firms went bankrupt, but not the bondholders". 3

In 1939, he retired from his position as president of his own company and turned his attention to publishing a magazine called "Encore," described as "a digest of the works of classical writers as well as modern".⁴ This venture ran for four years but was never a financial success. During World War 2, he sold it to the Saturday Review of Literature, which later shut it down.

In 1949, Dent Smith moved to Daytona Beach from Ridgewood, New Jersey, and acquired four acres of land on the peninsula, fronting on Peninsula Drive nearly three miles north of the Port Orange bridge and running to the Halifax river, one half mile from the ocean. In Daytona he began "looking for a hobby that would keep his hands busy and his mind occupied. He settled for collecting palms as he had collected other trees at his country estate in New Jersey". He studied as well as collected palms and, by 1960, had 150 different palm species growing on his property. (There are over 3000 species of palms in the world.)

In 1955, he conceived the idea of founding a palm society, to be "a loose grouping of people with a common interest" but "not another garden club".7 He began an extensive correspondence with Dr. Harold E. Moore, Jr., a distinguished botanist at Cornell University. By 1956 he had established a journal for this society which he at first wrote himself, running off copies on a mimeograph machine.8 With the help of Dr. Moore the journal became printed and illustrated under the name "Principes", with the thought that palm trees were the princes of all trees.9 Dr. Moore continued actively as an adviser and contributor to the journal until his death in 1982. Upon his death, a man who had studied and worked with him at Cornell spoke of Moore as "the man who brought the scientific study of palms into the twentieth century. . .and who became the authority on the palms of the world".10

Cold winters in Daytona Beach began to take their toll. Smith records a "long cold winter of 1957-58" followed by a sharp but severe hard freeze in 1962. The loss of palms was severe, reducing the number of his species to seventy. A series of further freezes in the 1980s, with the temperature dropping to the low twenties and even teens, caused the loss of many more palms. Great damage was done by the severe freezes of December 1983 and January 1985, shortly before his death in April of that year.

Before his death, in December 1983, he received an honorary degree from the Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne in appreciation for the work he did in establishing a palm garden on that campus. ¹² His second wife, Doris Smith, has kept the property up with those palms that survived the many freezes, along with many other plants.

Here are a few more details about this interesting person. He had his share of personal losses: both his children, a son and a daughter, predeceased him, the son being killed in the Korean War. It was his practice, well into old age, to walk two miles on the beach each day. A small collection of palm species, partly financed by Doris Smith, is planted at the Sugar Mill Gardens in Port Orange, called the Dent Smith Palmetum in his honor. The four acres on the peninsula where he stabled his palm garden remain a horticultural jewel of the area.

(Continued on page 10)



Mystery Palm growing in famed Palms 'n' Weeds garden in Vero Beach: but what is it? Bought years ago as a tiny Bismarckia (one of a pair, but the other actually is a Bismarckia) from a well-known Palm Beach County nurseryman. Still very small—not much more than 18 inches high, with a trunk less than 12 inches—the mature leaves are stiff, dark green on both sides, with the segment tips slightly split. There are threads in the sinuses of some other of its leaves. The hastula is flat. The petiole is unarmed. Unmask this individual's identity. Contact John Kennedy. Most plausible answer will receive a reward of 15 Allagoptera arenaria seeds from next summer's crop.

Dent Smith, The Palm Man

(Continued from page 9)

END NOTES

¹International Palm Society, <u>2002 Membership Roster</u>, p. 80.

²Susan Bowles, "Authority on Palm Trees Dent Smith Dies at 87," <u>Daytona Beach Morning Journal</u>, April 24, 1985, p. 4C.

³Nixon Smiley, "Dent Smith, a Recollection," <u>Principes: Journal of the International Palm Society</u>, 30:1 (January, 1986).

⁴Ibid, p. 12.

⁵Ibid, p. 12.

Melvin W. Sneed, "Dent Smith's Favorite Palm," Principes: Ibid, p. 24.

⁷No author. "Excerpts from Correspondence between Dent Smith and H. E. Moore, Jr.," <u>Principes</u>, 26:2 (April, 1982), p. 55.

8Ibid, p. 57.

Sneed, op.cit., p. 24

Frederick B. Essig, "Tributes to Harold E. Moore, Jr.," Principes: 26:3 (July, 1982), p. 130.

Dent Smith, "More About Cold Tolerance," <u>Palm</u> <u>Review</u>, Journal of the Central Florida Palm and Cycad Society 17:2 (March, 1997), p. 12.

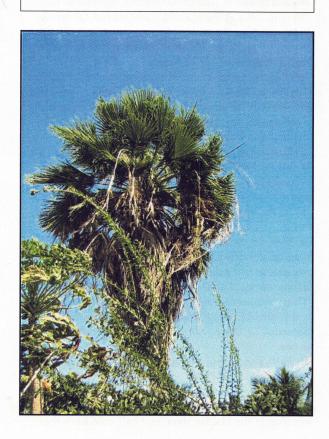
Reprinted from Principes, 8:1 (1964),

Jerome P. Keuper, "Along the Dent Smith Trail," Principes, 30:1 (January, 1986), pp. 21-23.

Nixon Smiley, op.cit., p. 16.

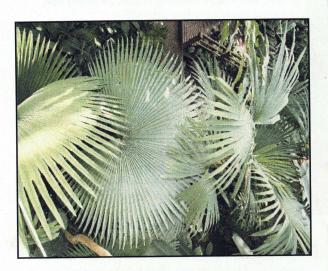
The blue, blue sky is Puerto Rico, where this Washingtonia filifera is growing on the west coast.

(Photo by well-known part-time puertoriqueño)





From Tom Pavluvcik's memory file, the crown of Brahea edulis in Huntington Gardens, California, A. D. 1978—July.



Kerriodoxa elegans in Chiangmai Conservatory, Thailand. (Photo by Lek Wallace)

GARDEN EVENTS

Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden,
Coral Gables
Palm and Cycad Sale
Saturday, March 18 9:30-4:30
Sunday, March 19 9:30-4:30
www.ftg.org

Leu Gardens, Orlando
Annual Plant Sale
Saturday, March 25 9-5 (members admitted, 8 a.m.)
Sunday, March 26 9-5
www.leugardens.org

Kanapaha Botanical Gardens, Gainesville Spring Garden Festival Saturday, March 25 Sunday, March 26 www.kanapha.org

University of South Florida Botanical Garden, Tampa Spring Plant Festival Saturday, April 8 10-4 Sunday, April 9 10-3 www.cas.usf.edu/garden

Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society Spring Sale Saturday, April 8 (9-5) Sunday, April 9 (9-4) Caloosa Park, Boynton Beach

Green Thumb Festival
Saturday, April 29 9-4
Sunday, April 30 9-4
Walter Fuller Park, St. Petersburg
www.stpete.org

Heathcote Botanical Gardens, Fort Pierce May Fest Saturday, April 29 9-4 www.heathcotebotanicalgardens.org (772) 464-4672

Bonsai Coconut Palms

[This article appeared in the December, 2005 (Summer 05-06') issue of NZ Palms & Cycads, magazine of the New Zealand Palm & Cycad Society and is reprinted here by permission of the author and of the editor, John Prince.]

By Frans van de Wydeven

"Impossible!" I hear you say, and I admit I didn't believe it myself after having being told about bonsai palms in Indonesia recently. After all, the general growth habits of palms do not lend themselves very well to bonsai culture. Unlike regular bonsai trees, palm trunks cannot be made thicker, or easily made to look old and gnarled. Palms also cannot be pruned from the top to get new, smaller growth lower down on the trunk, and most palms resent root pruning.

Nevertheless I decided to check it out myself and where better to start than Jakarta's Senayan area, where dozens of roadside mini garden centres operate seven days a week. Each stall owner there only has about 60 to 80 square metres of space available, but that is literally jam packed with hundreds of magnificent tropical



(Photo 1) Roadside garden centres in Senayan area of Jakarta, Indonesia.

plants, including many palms, cycads, heliconias, succulents and much more.

Stall owners all sleep on the premises in a tiny wooden shack to safeguard their precious plants, and they start their days early watering their plants before the temperature rises quickly to 30 degrees [93F] by 9 am. I visited this busy central city street on a Sunday

morning, and the sight of all these beautiful tropical plants is awesome.

Large potted cycads are particularly stunning, and one of the stall owners told me that it only takes about 15 years to get a 1 metre trunk on his cycads, which he said came from the Indonesian island of Sumatra. To my untrained eye they look very much like *Cycas revoluta*, but even so the growth rate of these cycads in tropical conditions is very fast.

Prices of plants are ridiculously cheap by our standards and for about NZ\$20 you can pick up a large *Phoenix roebelenii* with already one metre of trunk, or a two metre tall clumping Lipstick Palm (Cyrtostachys renda) with its vivid red crown shaft. Mind you, this palm is so cold sensitive that it already shivers here in hot and humid Jakarta when you hold a cold beer too close to it, let alone trying to grow it outside the tropics.

Some of the larger palms for sale of sizes up to four to five metres tall are sitting in bags dug into the ground, and a large trunking Foxtail (Wodyetia bifucata) can be yours for less than \$100.

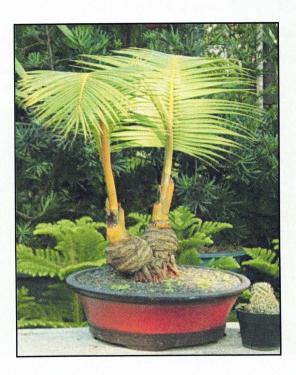
As I walked along the busy streets I kept asking stall owners about the legendary bonsai coconut trees, but I only got negative responses until finally one person said: "Yes mister, there is Pak Nunung who sells lots of bonsai trees and it is not far from here". With the directions given I did eventually find the stall of Pak Nunung and, wow! - there they were: Bonsai Coconuts! Never mind the dozens of other magnificent, but normal, bonsai trees such as 50 year old Ficus benjamina specimens. My interest was really only in Pak Nunung's small but fine collection of Bonsai Coconuts. "Do you like my Pohon Kelapa [Indonesian for coconut]?" he said proudly. All were no taller than about 50 to 60cm and looked quite strange in their shallow pots. Some even had a weird gnarled trunk (Photo 2) with partially air roots, but the foliage was always distinctively Cocos nucifera. "These are about 10 to 15 years old" he said and "I water them every day, but never give bonsai any fertiliser otherwise too many roots and leaves grow.'

Hard to understand how these bonsai palms remain so green and healthy on just air and water, and (Continued on page 13)



(Photo 2) Above, a 15-year-old bonsai Cocos nucifera.

(Photo 3) Below, twin bonsai Cocos nucifera grown from a single nut.



Bonsai Coconut Palms

(Continued from page 12)

they obviously will never fruit or put on much new growth, but individual fronds apparently last several years and are only sporadically being replaced with new ones.

Pak Nunung explained that only every three years or so he trims some of the roots when they try to grow out from the pot. "How much do you sell them for?" I asked, and he replied: "600,000 Rupiah", which is about \$100, but more expensive was a twin Bonsai Coconut (Photo 3) he had on display, where two plants have grown from a single nut. "Very rare" Pak Nunung said, and it was evidently his pride and joy. I asked him how long such bonsai palms could live and he said: "Many years, although not as long as normal bonsai plants, but never put them indoors and always water them daily".

So there you have it. Bonsai Coconuts do exist, and they evidently survive quite well in Indonesia's hot, humid climate. The bonsai palm look may not be for everyone, and those who prefer natural, sleek-growing plants may consider this cruelty to palms, while avid bonsai growers might consider these Coconuts to be bonsai impostors.

Growing bonsai palms in our more temperate climate might also be much more difficult, but could still be an interesting hobby for palm enthusiasts with lots of patience, but who lack a large garden or who do not enjoy the chores of caring for large in-ground palms. This procedure for the cultivation of palms is apparently nothing new and was even attempted on a commercial basis in Japan (refer to article on: http://www.fukubonsai.com/3a3f.html.) The PACSOA website also has an informative article on bonsai palms written by David Schwartz. Apart from Cocus nucifera, other good candidates for bonsai palms are reported to be Phoenix roebelenii, Rhapis spp., Chamaerops humilis and Dypsis lutescens.

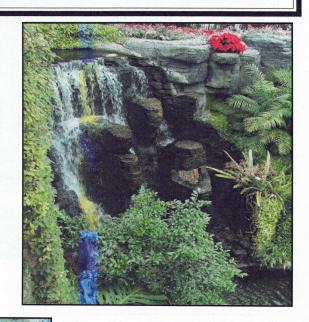
[What other species of palms might make suitable subjects for bonsai? Any members devoted to the art of bonsai are strongly encouraged to contact the Editor.]

A Visit to Gaylord Opryland, Nashville, Tennessee

By Diana and Mark Grabowski

In September 2004 CFPACS held its quarterly meeting at the Gaylord Palms Resort in Kissimmee. It was a wonderful meeting for many reasons but the main memory I have is that it was a nice break for all of us in Florida from hurricane restoration work on our homes and gardens. I heard several of the CFPACS members mention that the Gaylord Opryland in Nashville, Tennessee was even more spectacular than the Gaylord Resort in Florida. Comes to be I had just received information about the Southeastern US Regional National Science Teachers Convention scheduled for December 2005 would be held at the Gaylord Opryland Resort. I applied to present at the conference and was accepted.

So Mark and I took a "road-trip" and headed up to Nashville, Tennessee the weekend of December 1st.



entire resort. From a botanical viewpoint it was awe inspiring. Palms and cycads were represented throughout the entire resort and as you can imagine there were no signs of wind or cold-damage despite temperatures outside in the 30's.

Noteworthy were Arenga pinnata, Archontophoenix sp., Fishtails, European Fan Palms, tall mature specimens of Howea species (Kentia palms) with lots of clear trunk on them, and

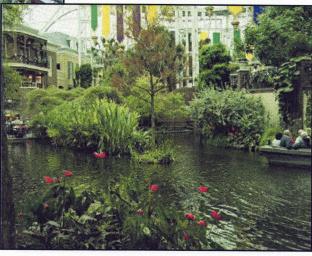
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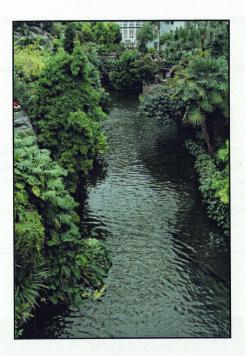


The temperature in Nashville was in the low 30's when we arrived and it was damp, it looked as if it would snow at anytime.

Our first impression of Gaylord Opryland was "jaw dropping", it was phenomenal. The resort was decorated for the holidays, which made it even more spectacular. Gaylord Opryland is divided into four distinct areas with variations amongst each of them.

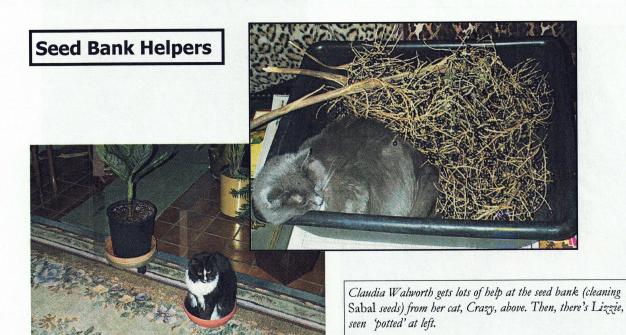
The entire Gaylord Opryland is an enclosed climatecontrolled atrium, nine acres in all of beautiful indoor gardens. Waterways and pathways wind throughout the

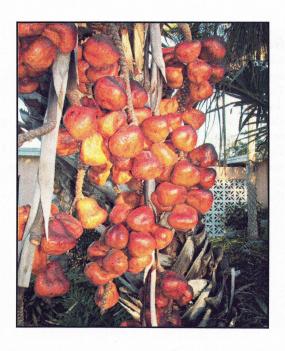




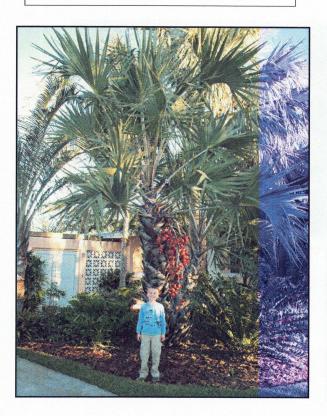
Gaylord Opryland (Continued from page 14)

many species of cycads including Encephalartos species. There were also a wide variety of bromeliads. In closing, for those of you palm enthusiasts who also have a liking for country music and are heading up to the Nashville area, plan on visiting the Gaylord Opryland Resort. If you don't actually stay at the resort, plan on spending at least an entire day exploring it. Several photos of Gaylord Opryland are seen on these two pages.





Below, Owen Yorio (8) stands before the female Hyphaene coriacea that bears the fruit pictured above.



Neil's Treasures

Visitors to Neil Yorio's garden during the December meeting saw these brilliant fruit of Hyphaene coriacea. The female palm, in front of the house, is pollinated by a beautiful blue male plant in back. Seed will soon be available through the CFFPACS seed bank, says Neil—who took all pictures on these two pages.



Marina Yorio, Neil and Karen's 5-year-old daughter, provides scale for Dad's Pseudophoenix sargentii, produced from seed in 1989. This palm came to Neil as a gift from Mike Dahme in 1996.



Marina stands in front of Zamia sp.

'Jamaica" that is loaded with pollinated female cones. Seeds of this very interesting and coldhardy cycad will be available next year in the CFPACS seed bank.

Right, Medemia argun is one of three individuals of this species at Neil's, grown from seed collected during the discovery trip of Gibbons and Spanner in Sudan. Below, a healthy breeding colony of Zamia amblyphyllidia.



December Social Meeting, Grabowskis' Garden (by Diana)

(Continued from page 6)

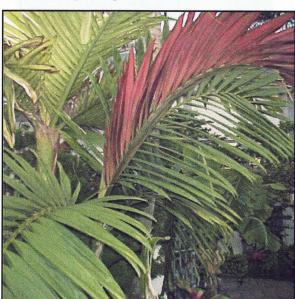
Approximately 50 plus folks dropped by the Grabowski's for lunch, plant auction, and sale. Luckily, the weather held up and it was a beautiful day. Members browsed the Grabowski garden viewing up to 100 different palm and cycad species. Just in time for the meet the *Chambyronia macrocarpa* cooperated for the event by opening a stunning new red leaf (photo seen on page 23).

Members were able to observe what species are tolerant of wind and salt conditions, and also observe how the palms faired during the past few hurricane seasons. Folks enjoyed lunch by the seaside. Dean Vanderbleek even got to catch a few waves before lunch. The auction raised \$473.00.

Sonia Larson a local Brevard County resident and artist donated a piece of art work for the auction. Sonia uses acrylics to paint Queen Palm Boots. Her work can be viewed at: www.PalmTreeAmerica.com

Mark and I want to thank all of the folks that came out to visit all of the gardens during our December meet and also a big thank you to all those who donated plants for the auction including Dave and Gerri Prall who donated complimentary Bromeliads for members to take home.

Thanks for all the wonderful covered dishes brought by all the members, and a very big thank you goes out to Charlene Palm, David Reid, Scott Ward, and Neil Yorio for opening up their gardens for CFPACS members and the general public to view.



A tiny solicitation of the Membership on behalf of their very own EDITOR

ALL RIGHT, YOU HAVE BEEN GROWING PALMS FOR QUITE A WHILE NOW.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED, PRINCIPALLY WHAT NOT TO DO?

ANY TIPS, SHORT-CUTS, SAGE ADVICE WOULD YOU HAVE FOR BEGIN-NERS?

LET THE EDITOR KNOW.
IF NECESSARY, HE WILL
PUBLISH YOUR PIECE OF
WISDOM ANONYMOUSLY
(UNLESS, OF COURSE,
YOU WISH THE GLORY
AND FAME OF YOUR
NAME IN LIGHTS! IN:
THE PALMATEER.)

Left, the beautiful wine-red emerging leaf of Chambeyronia macrocarpa, caught by Chuck Grieneisen's camera.



Let us strew rose petals in the path of Bob Johnson, who has agreed to become the CFPACS treasurer. Mercifully, the membership doesn't know all that this volunteer job entails. Not only keeping track of expenditures by the profligate staff (me: many receipts each for \$2, out of petty cash), the costs of printing The Palmateer (not cheap, but color printing would be too expensive from a commercial printshop), and mailing said publication (you don't want to know the amount). Then, there are the several forms demanded quarterly from the State of Florida (which seems suspicious that non-profit organizations are cheating it out of tax money). Furthermore, other considerations include the CFPACS dowry in the bank (to be jealously guarded) and the requests for grants from worthy and deserving institutions and individuals (sometime recipients of modest amounts). Membership checks also make their way to the Treasurer. We're not exactly a big corporation—though certainly more profitable than Enron—but keeping track of all this requires the "bean counter" that Bob assures us that he really is. Praise the Lord! It was a very short line indeed when the treasurership (invented word, English is a Living Language) opened up.

Anyone who has never been to Montgomery Botanical Center (MBC) really should go on March 11th. Granted, Miami is a long drive from Central Florida, but the palms and cycads there are stunning. Some folks believe Monty surpasses the collection at Fairchild. Everyone has been to Fairchild, not so many have visited Montgomery. When CFPACS goes to MBC, some folks have been known to slip off to Fairchild later the same afternoon. No saturation point for the palm/cycad addict. Dr. Patrick Griffith, the new director will lead the tour, chances are Larry Noblick, will be on-site and may also accompany the group. Our chapter has a history of contributions to Montgomery's projects and we did, in the past, receive seed and plants that we auctioned or sold to benefit CFPACS. ****

Young Royals, 5 acres of them, are being grown in St. Lucie County along SR 713 between Lakewood Park and Fort Pierce. I see them every day as I drive from Vero Beach to work in Fort Pierce. While I am not of the opinion that every one-story house should have a couple of towering 60-foot Royals in front—a common enough sight in both towns—(wouldn't denizens

of Orlando <u>love</u> to be able to grow these?) still, a refreshing sight. More commonplace is acres and acres of Washingtonias being raised for the trade, probably to replace all those that were snapped in the hurricanes or struck by lightning. (Ray Hernández will present a rebuttal in the June issue of this publication.) Don't get me started about tracts devoted to Queen Palms. . .

How often do I moan (in this space) about not receiving enough material from members so that the issue is smaller than what I think it should be (32 pages). I should have my head examined. The less stuff I get, the less trouble for me and for Diana in printing. Furthermore, with a small number of pages, the cost of postage (remember, now 39¢ a first-class ounce) is much reduced. The publication of a neighboring society gradually diminished from 10 pages to none. Imagine the savings!

My dead Latania lontaroides, pride of my backyard, 6 feet of clear trunk, 30+ big leaves, gone after Hurricane Frances—or was it Jeanne?--in 2004. The leaves had dropped down in response to the storm(s), OK. But the spear lifted out about a week or so after Jeanne. And I found frass, almost as deep as my elbow, in the cavity, with big black palmetto weevils in it. Poisoning these seemed to be the best idea and I poured a lethal cocktail, provided by Mike Dahme, over them. To no avail. I had hoped that a year later, some small green piece would emerge deep down, but this didn't happen. I know that I had been a bit surprised at how quickly after the hurricanes that the palmetto weevils had created this mush. But Mark Grabowski had another take on this, telling me that Latanias are very wind resilient and Mark's held tough through three hurricanes as well as those in South Florida after Andrew. So, maybe the hurricanes didn't kill my beautiful palm; instead, I just hadn't found out that it had already been infested. To make it more distressing, about half the leaves are still green. I'm taking suggestions for a wind-tolerant, cold-hardy replacement in the summer ahead.

(Continued on page 20)

From the Editor's Desk

RESIDENCE RESIDENCE RESIDENCE

(Continued from page 19)

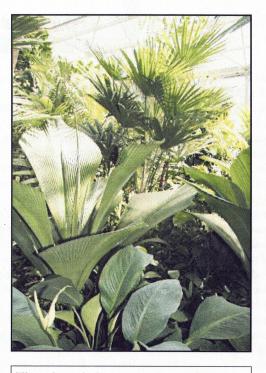
Another post-hurricane note: my neighbor at last took the chainsaw to the living 40-foot *Livistona drudei* laying across the far corner of her backyard. Propping it up, back into the famous Palms 'n' Weeds garden would have cost \$8,000. R.I.P.

The winter seems to have been pretty mild up to this point (February 4th). I will not tempt fate by any statement of palm hubris. Maybe hurricanes have become the bugbear rather than freezes?

My little old Coccothrinax argentata, not much more than 15 inches high, that I've had for more than 10 years, died dead in the course of a week. It turned brown that fast, and was gone. When I asked board members what had happened, one suggested that cats had urinated on it (no, that's a distinctive smell), while others thought that the soil was too acidic and needed lime applied fast—if there was any green showing at all. I did put lime around it, more in hope than belief, but in vain.

What went wrong? Does anyone know? The little palm had flowered and fruited for three years.





The palm in the foreground is that old Central Florida favorite, Johannesteijsmannia altifrons, the "Joey Palm." Alas, not seen in Brooksville or even Port St. Lucie, and here growing in a conservatory in Chiangmai, Thailand.

(Photo by Lek Wallace)



Left, Burretiokentia vieillardii, with about 5 feet of clear trunk, in the Palms 'n' Weeds garden in Vero Beach. At left, a Tabebuia umbellata knocked flat by Hurricane Frances, still alive but too brittle to raise. At right, a bald cypress, 50 feet high, now at a 45-degree angle from the same 2004 hurricane. The New Caledonia palm has thrived (slowly) on the owner's policy of benign neglect: a little water, a little fertilizer when thought of (infrequently). Knocked a little askew by Frances, the palm was easily righted.

TREASURER'S REPORT

September 17, 2005 to December 10, 2005 INCOME: Seed sales..... 541.17 Membership Dues..... 335.00 Donations to CFPACS..... 0.00 Public Sales (USF Fall Sale)..... 221.68 Private Sales (Ruskin meeting)..... 272.61 Total 1,370.46 **EXPENSES** Publications (v. 25, no. 4)..... 871.15 Grants..... 0.00 Miscellaneous (Sales tax penalty, T-shirt sales)..... 5.00 Total 876.15 INCOME – EXPENSES..... 494.31 Bank balance 09/17/05..... 19,302.56 Bank balance 12/10/05..... 19,986.57 Net increase..... 684.01 (Note: Club-budget and bank reporting periods do not exactly coincide.) ASSETS: Endowment (mutual funds)..... 10,000.00 (purchase price) 9,456.26 (value at time of purchase) 9,687.19 (current value, close of market 12/09/2005) (6,728.38 Washington, 2,958.81 banked from sale of Putnam shares) Office equipment and tent..... 1,595.00 Computers and software..... 2,544.41 minus depreciation Printer..... 4,250.00

<u>Treasurer's note</u>: At last, our budget has gone back into the black, thanks to good seed sales, a lot of membership dues, and some income from two sales. Our only major expenses were for the December *Palmateer*.

[This is Mike Merritt's last Treasurer's Report. In the June issue of The Palmateer, Bob Johnson will be the author and guardian of CFPAC's funds. —Editor]

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



"Punxsutawney Phil," the Yankee groundhog, saw his shadow on February 2nd so folks up north can expect another six more weeks of winter. However, the Confederate counterpart "General Beauregard Lee," groundhog prognosticator of spring for the south, saw no sign of his shadow thus, all of us Floridians can breathe a sigh of relief that we can expect an earlier spring.

That's, of course, if you rely on groundhogs to predict the weather.

Around the World, Palms Make the News Again.....

Residents in a south Devon town of England were angry when several 50+ year-old palm trees were being cut down to make room to build a children's playground by the Teignbridge District Council. Four palm trees were cut down at the seafront in Teignmouth before the work was temporarily stopped by the local tree warden who had not been notified of the plans to cut down the palms prior to work beginning. Additionally, the warden received 30 calls from concerned residents and business owners related to the

cutting down of the palm trees. We need some of those tree wardens here!

The Teignbridge District Council agreed to bring in a tree expert to determine whether the remaining dozen palm trees were in good enough condition to be kept and included in the new playground. The palm trees were



planted at the park originally, however, they do grow naturally in parts of the region and are even featured on the district's coat of arms. (news. bbc.co.uk). Stay tuned in the summer issue of *The Palmateer* of the fate of the remaining dozen palm trees. [Hey, Diana, The Palmateer reports on palms in New Zealand, not the UK.]

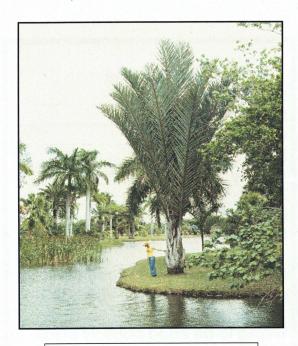
Closer to home... royal palm trees that have lined Biscayne Boulevard for decades are being replaced by live oaks which city planners believe will provide more shade and beautify the busy boulevard. Planners argue that Miami is lacking in tree canopy and that by planting more shade trees it will make Miami prettier, cleaner, and pedestrian-friendly. Opponents of the removal of the royals and planting of the shade trees are reminding the city planners that most of the palm trees were the only trees that withstood the high winds of the past hurricanes, including the wrath of "Wilma". Many private landowners and developers are planting only palms after losing their hardwood trees during the past few hurricane seasons. The city planners have stated that they are moving forward with beautifying Biscayne Boulevard with careful thought and not just haphazardly removing palm trees and planting shade trees. Let's hope that some of our neighboring south Florida palm enthusiasts are getting involved with this "beautification" project. How about inviting some of the city planners to the next South Florida Palm Society meeting? (detnews.com)

One country that has recently taken a conservatory approach to palms is Cambodia. Palm trees are a national symbol in Cambodia and will be planted by the tens of thousands along the country's border with Vietnam. Agriculture Minister Chan Sarun told Kyodo News that as many as 50,000 palm trees will be seeded and planted in seven provinces bordering Vietnam. In 2005 the palm tree was designated by the government as Cambodia's national and symbolic tree.

Pok Leak Reasey, Director of Association of Palm Tree Conservation for Cambodian Development, a local nonprofit organization is pleased at the government's move however he stated that "the government must take serious action to preserve the existing palm trees", which are often cut down illegally for local use and exportation to Thailand and Vietnam. The agriculture ministry is seeking to require people to apply for a permit before cutting down any palm trees. The palm tree is regarded very highly by Cambodians where it's been used as a logo for political parties. The spread of palm trees in Cambodia is due to a past royal order for all people of the Khmer Kingdom to plant a palm tree to signify their allegiance. (asia.news.yahoo.com)

In Cambodia's rural areas, palm trees are handed down by parents to their children as wedding gifts when they are not rich enough to offer cows or money. No need to return that wedding gift! I was glad to come across this article since I have many fond memories of growing up in Bangkok, Thailand, and Vientiane, Laos, whose landscapes have changed drastically over the years, as all landscapes are subject to the perils of modernization.

(Continued on page 23)



It's 1979, Esperanza Pavluvcik gazes into the water at Fairchild, one hand on a Raphia species. Husband Tom manned the camera.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(Continued from page 22)

In closing, I would like to welcome aboard Bob Johnson, the new treasurer for CFPACS. A position that became open as our past Treasurer, Mike Merritt, relocated to Hawaii. I can't say enough positive words to thank Mike for his past services as treasurer to CFPACS. I was handling the job of treasurer since December 10th until Feb. 2nd when Bob officially took on the position. I did breathe a big sigh of relief when we loaded up Bob's truck with the Treasurer's file cabinet, etc. Welcome aboard, Bob, and a very big thank you to Mike Merritt for his many years of dedication and wonderful organizational skills.

Lastly, mark your calendars for Saturday, March 11th for our first quarterly meeting of 2006 to be held at Montgomery Botanical Center in Miami. Details of the meeting can be found in this issue of *The Palmateer*.

-Diana Wehrell-Grabowski

Fourth Quarter Meeting Minutes December, 2005

The fourth quarter meeting was held at the Grabowskis'. The continued discussion of finding a new treasurer was addressed first. It was the last meeting attended by our departing treasurer, Mike Merritt. The spring meeting was discussed. March 11 is the date. It was decided to hold the spring meet at Montgomery Botanical Center.

A motion was made and passed that our society will become a local chapter of The Cycad Society, like we are a local chapter of the International Palm Society. **Tom Broome** volunteered to be Central Vice President for another year.

-Chuck Grieneisen, Secretary



From Tom Pavluvcik's Yesteryear File: wife Esperanza with Polyandrococos caudescens in U. A. Young's garden, Tampa, in 1975. The species has recently, courtesy of busy taxonomists, become Allagoptera caudescens.

Name

Street

City

State.

County

Phone (area)

Strike a blow for greenery!

As the bulldozers relentlessly reduce Florida to a scraped-out shell littered with a rubble of wall-to-wall houses, make your mark by planting palms and cycads. Not the same familiar stuff flogged by the Big Box stores, but tasteful, interesting, different plants. But how to know or find more unusual species? Easy! Join the Central Florida Palm & Cycad Society (CFPFS). Visit the collections of members who are happy to share their expertise with beginners. Attend quarterly meetings where palms and cycads are always offered for sale by member-vendors. Receive this sterling publication, read The Palmateer quarterly to be in the know.

These advantages can be yours for a mere \$15 a year or \$40 for three years. Fill out the form on the right (or its facsimile). Send your check to the Membership Chair Karen Barrese at the address listed.

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:

P. O. Box 368 Lawrence, KS 66044

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

7.5			-

Zip_____ Email____

Please print

Wish to be added to Seed Bank E-

mail list? (Circle one) YES

Willing to be listed publicly in roster? (Circle one) YES NO

Mail check made out to CFPACS (domestic: \$15 one year; \$40 three years; foreign: US\$20 one year) to:

Karen Barrese
CFPACS Membership Chair
5942 Ehren Cutoff
Land O Lakes, FL 34639
cfpacsmembership@msn.com

Membership also available at website: <u>www.cfpacs.org</u>

The dues of anyone joining after October 1 are applied to the following calendar year and include the December issue.

Closing date for material for the June issue is

MAY 12



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Postcards from Nong Nooch for Florida Homebodies

Lek Wallace took these striking pictures of the famous Thai botanical garden on a recent visit to her homeland. The pictures were first published on Dave Reid's Brevard website's gardening chatroom. (www.2ndLight.com)



