

The Palmateer

Central Florida Palm & Cycad Society • Spring, 2011 • Volume 31, Number 1



Central Florida Palm & Cycad Society

www.cfpacs.org

CFPACS 2011 Leadership

David Reid • President

100 Hillard Ln., Merritt Island, FL 32952
(321) 454-4771 • president@cfpacs.org

John Green • East Vice-President & Seed Bank (East)

6650 Chain Fern Rd., Grant, FL 32949
(321) 729-3973 • eastvp@cfpacs.org

Ron Hart • Central Vice-President

1008 Little Fawn Ct., Apopka, FL 32712
(352) 455-1080 • centralvp@cfpacs.org

Mike Evans • West Vice-President

6015 - 100th Way N., St. Petersburg, FL 33708
(727) 393-8950 • westvp@cfpacs.org

Bob Johnson • Past President & Palmateer Editor

PO Box 560907, Orlando, FL 32856
(407) 438-0250 • palmateer@cfpacs.org

Chuck Grieneisen • Secretary

PO Box 621689, Oviedo, FL 32762
(407) 359-6276 • secretary@cfpacs.org

Catherine Johnson • Treasurer

PO Box 560907, Orlando, FL 32856
(407) 438-0250 • treasurer@cfpacs.org

Karen Barrese • Membership Chair

5942 Ehren Cutoff, Land O Lakes, FL 34639
(813) 996-7148 • membership@cfpacs.org

Frankie Ramos • Webmaster

4169 N. Indian River Dr., Cocoa, FL 32927
(321) 634-5223 • webmaster@cfpacs.org

Mike Dahme • Seed Bank Coordinator

PO Box 89, Grant, FL 32949
(321) 704-0708 • palmasiera@gmail.com

Lucinda McCartney • Seed Bank Rep (West)

4217 Marlin Ln., Palmetto, FL 34221
(941) 375-0239 • mccartney.lucinda@gmail.com

The **Central Florida Palm & Cycad Society** is an affiliate of the **International Palm Society** and **The Cycad Society**. CFPACS is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to scientific and educational projects related to the study of palms and cycads, their propagation, culture, conservation, care, and development. We assist in the preservation of palms and cycads for future generations as well as promote and maintain public interest in palms and cycads.

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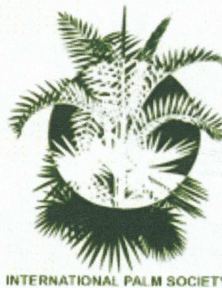
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Karen Barrese
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5942 Ehren Cutoff
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Since 1977

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Front cover: *Attalea rostrata* seen at Orlando's Leu Gardens during the March 2008 CFPACS meeting. Unfortunately, this palm has since been killed by a lightning strike (photo by Bob Johnson).

Back cover: Piccabeen palm (*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*) growing under oak canopy at Leu Gardens (photo by Bob Johnson).

The Palmateer Editorial Team

Editor: Bob Johnson

Contributors: John Kennedy, David Reid, Eric Schmidt

Layout/Production: Bob Johnson

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CFPACS Meetings . . . Have you missed them?

CFPACS members and friends gathered in June, 2009 at the Young's garden in Tampa (photo by Bob Johnson).

Planting a Seed

Thank you for electing me President of the Central Florida Palm and Cycad Society (CFPACS). I have been a member of CFPACS for five years and am both humbled and excited about taking this important role. The best part is the opportunity to work with members who have established the Society as the major source of expertise in the Central Florida gardening community, as well as one of the best sources of friendship and hospitality. I look forward to a year full of growth and prosperity for CFPACS.

My interest in collecting plants started in my teenage years. The obsessive *seed* was planted while wandering in the backyard of our Satellite Beach home and discovered ripe tomatoes mysteriously growing. We didn't plant them – where did they come from? I asked my dad, and together we realized they must have arrived as "volunteer" seeds in the sludge we had used to fertilize the sandy yard. The tomato was eaten by a human, digested, and survived the waste water treatment process and set fruit in our yard.

After giving them a good washing, my dad and I enjoyed every bite of the tomatoes we found, and laughed as we thanked each other for unknowingly planting them. Although the taste was temporary, a fascination with plants was permanently planted by those gastronomically-transported seeds. That moment is still one of my favorite memories of my dad, who passed away a few years ago.

Things really got interesting when I became a homeowner. Shortly after marrying the love of my life, Amy, we were fortunate enough to be able to build a house on south Merritt Island in 1995. The property came with stately live oak and sabal palms, but was otherwise a blank slate. We were challenged to design our new landscape with little knowledge about Florida gardening at the time.

It didn't take long to discover my love for palms – their beauty, rich diversity and heritage drew me in immediately, and I have been collecting

both common and exotic varieties ever since. I am always amazed when I learn about a new species and enjoy the hunt to plant one, or three. I haven't taken to cycads yet, but I understand that is the next progression!

I also collect fruit trees, croton, cordyline, and other like ornamentals. I still can't resist bringing new specimens home, and when the wife asks me where in the world we are going to fit them in the yard, my consistent answer is "There is always room for one more tree". I know you can relate.

My day job is a computer engineer for a contractor at Kennedy Space Center and I'm married with a 13 year old son. Landscaping and participating in garden clubs is a great equalizer to the stress of the modern world.

In conclusion, my role as President is like that seed that had found its way from sludge to a vine ripe tomato. Hopefully when the time comes to step down, it has germinated and blossomed and provided fruit for the next person.

Contact me anytime at: damy5@juno.com

Dave Reid
CFPACS President

CFPACS Needs Your Help!

Now is an ideal time to invest your time and energy in CFPACS. Contact our new president, Dave Reid if you can help with:

- Meeting venues
- Palmateer articles
- Becoming a vendor



The Pandanaceae: Pandans, Screw Pines and other Palm-like Plants

Article and photos by Eric Schmidt

Leu Gardens

Orlando, Florida

eric.schmidt@cityoforlando.net

Pandanaceae is a family of fibrous shrubs, climbers, and tree-like plants. Four genera comprise this monocot family with around 900 species. They are native to subtropical and tropical regions of the Old World and are found wild from western tropical Africa to southeastern Asia, South Pacific islands and into northern Australia and northern New Zealand. Many are found growing in coastal locations or swampy habitats.

Many pandans have palm-like stems and are mistaken as palms. They often have prop roots and the base that provide support. Pandans have long, narrow leaves that are simple and undivided. Many are armed with teeth along the margins and midrib. The leaves are arranged spirally around the trunk. This gives the plant the common name "screw-pine". The inflorescences are mostly borne terminally. Some bear brilliantly colored bracts. The actual flowers are small, and, borne on pedicels. Both female and male flowers lack a calyx and a corolla. Pandan fruits are berries or multilocular drupes, and often resemble pineapples. Pandans are dioecious, with separate male and female plants.

Pandans are believed to have first appeared in the late Cretaceous period. Pandans are only distantly related to palms. The Pandanaceae family belongs to the order Pandales which also includes the families Cyclanthaceae, Stemonaceae, Triuridaceae and Velloziaceae. The palm family, Arecaceae (Palmae), belongs to the order Arecales and is the only family placed in this order. Appearance wise, many pandans look similar to palms and are often mistaken for them. The Nipa Palm, *Nypa fruticans*, was first placed into Pandanaceae then moved to Arecaceae. It was believed to be a link between the palms and pandans. Superficially, the inflorescence of *Nypa* resembles that of a pandan.

Pandanus is the largest genus in Pandanaceae and the most widely grown. There are over 700 species in *Pandanus*. Many are poorly known and are not in cultivation. *Pandanus* is found wild from western tropical Africa and Madagascar to southeastern Asia and northern Australia and also on South Pacific Islands. In many locales, different *Pandanus* is widely used by native cultures. The leaves are used for crafts and weaving. Many uses can be made of the leaves including baskets, textiles, clothing and mats. Some also have leaves that are used in cooking. The leaves impart a

distinct odor and flavoring and are used with curry, rice and desserts. Some also bear edible fruits or seeds.

Freycinetia is the second largest pandan genus with over 170 different species. They are mainly found from southeastern Asia to northern Australia and New Zealand. Most *Freycinetia* are climbers with slender stems.

This page: Pandanus utilis growing in Orlando at Leu Gardens (left, close up view of prop roots below), Walt Disney World (below left) and Universal Studios (below right).

Facing page: Pandanus baptistii growing at Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden in Miami.



They climb with the aid of aerial roots produced along the stems. These roots adhere to the tree, palm, or other structure the plant is climbing up. Many *Freycinetia* species bear inflorescences with brightly colored bracts or colorful fruits.

Martellidendron contains 7 species, 6 of which are native to Madagascar. The other is found in the Seychelles. *Martellidendron* was recently separated out of *Pandanus*.

The last pandan genus is *Sararanga*. Only 2 species are found. One is native to the Philippines and the other is found in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

Despite there being around 900 species of pandans, only a few species are common in cultivation. Several are commonly grown in southern Florida landscapes and they are sometimes seen in the warmer parts of central Florida. Here at Leu Gardens, we have been trialing many different pandans to test for winter hardiness. Some pandans have proven fairly hardy in our climate (USDA zone 9b) but others have been killed. Some pandans can take a brief dip below freezing but cannot tolerate long periods of cool and cold temperatures above freezing. The winter of 2009-2010 was a good test on the hardiness of the pandans being grown here. Further along in this article are results of how the pandans fared that winter.

Pandanus utilis, Screw-pine, is probably the most commonly cultivated pandan for landscaping. It is native to Madagascar and the Mascarene Islands and can grow 20-30 feet tall. The spiny leaves are edged in red. Young specimens are often grown as container specimens. They usually grow unbranched until they reach around 6 to 7 feet tall. *Pandanus utilis* is drought and salt tolerant and is often used in coastal landscaping in southern Florida. It can tolerate light frost or brief dips below freezing but it cannot handle sustained periods of cool and cold. There were quite a few superb specimens of *Pandanus utilis* growing around Orlando but most were killed or severely injured following the winter of 2009-2010. Many of these showed little cold

damage following winter but eventually declined in late spring and early summer. This was a result of the prolonged cold we experienced. At Leu Gardens, we had a 20ft. specimen die as a result. In the past it had tolerated colder minimum temperatures but could not cope with the long duration of cold. Surprisingly, 2 younger specimens survived.

Pandanus baptistii is another common pandan in southern Florida. It is a more "landscape friendly" specimen as the leaves are smooth with no spines. It is a thick clustering species that grows 10-20 feet tall. Untrimmed, it makes a dense clump but the suckers can be removed to open it up and expose the attractive trunks. The cultivar 'Aureus' has pale yellow stripes. It is very attractive and is popular in South Florid. *Pandanus baptistii* is native to South Pacific Islands and is tender to cold. I always have seen it killed if it gets below 28F.

Pandanus sanderi and *Pandanus veitchii* are two other striped pandans sometimes seen in southern Florida. Both have striped foliage that is very spiny. Both can grow 10-15ft. tall and form thick clumps. If they aren't thinned out they make thick masses and can be used as an impenetrable barrier. The main difference is *Pandanus sanderi* has yellow striped leaves while *Pandanus veitchii* has white stripes. Both are native to South Pacific Islands. These 2 pandans have also proved tender here and get killed below 28F.



Pandanus odorifer was formerly known as *Pandanus odoratissimus*. It is native to a wide area of southeastern Asia and is seen occasionally in southern Florida. It is a thick clumping species that also branches readily. It grows 20-30 ft tall and the leaves are green, spiny, and recurved. Like *Pandanus utilis*, this pandan can tolerate brief dips below freezing but not prolonged cold.

Pandanus amaryllifolius, the Fragrant Screw-pine, is a tender species native to southeastern Asia. It has long smooth leaves that are bright green and with an "earthy" scent. In southeastern Asia, the leaves are widely used in cooking to flavor rice and other dishes. It grows 10-20 feet tall. It is a very ornamental and fragrant species but unfortunately tender to cold. This has been the most cold sensitive *Pandanus* we have grown. It has always died when it gets below 30F. It propagates very easily from suckers so I always keep 1 or 2 in the greenhouse.

Another very ornamental species that should be more widely grown is *Pandanus dubius*. It is native from Indonesia to the Philippines and Micronesia and was formerly known as *Pandanus pacificus*. This is another clumping pandan and it grows 20-30 feet tall. This has very wide leaves, wider than most pandans. The leaves are bright green but have teeth along the edges. *Pandanus dubius* is also very salt tolerant and would make a

superb specimen for coastal landscapes in southern Florida.

Pandanus furcatus, Himalayan Screw-pine, is probably the most cold hardy species of *Pandanus*. It is native to the Himalayan region from northern India to southern China. It has long, dark green leaves that are spiny. It does not cluster and forms a solitary palm-like trunk that only sparingly branches. It also develops large prop roots and reaches about 20ft tall. At Leu Gardens, this has proven to be the hardiest pandan we have grown so far. In past freezes it has tolerated down to 27F with only minor damage. Following the prolonged cold of last winter, most of our specimens seemed to suffer only minor or no damage. Later in spring all had their center leaves pull out. However, a few weeks later new growth pushed out and the plants recovered with no ill effects. At Leu Gardens there is a specimen planted at the front gate that has reached 10ft tall and has flowered.

Pandanus monotheca, the Giant Screw-pine, is the largest of all the pandans. It typically grows unbranched on a solitaire trunk and can reach 30-50 feet tall. It also has very long, spiny leaves that can easily exceed 10 feet in length. *Pandanus monotheca* is native to coastal forest regions of Thailand and Malaysia. Despite its tropical origins, this pandan shows some cold hardiness. We have several specimens planted out at Leu Gardens and all showed little or no damage last winter.

Pandanus pygmaeus 'Variegatus', the Pygmy Screw-pine, is at the other end of the size spectrum. It is the smallest *Pandanus* species, only growing 1-2 feet tall. The narrow leaves are spiny and have yellow stripes. The plant forms dense, creeping clumps and makes a great groundcover. From a distance it can easily be mistaken for *Liriope*, but once you reach into the

leaves you realize it is actually a *Pandanus*! Pygmy Screw-pine is native to northern and eastern Madagascar.

Pandanus tectorius, the Thatch Screw-pine, is another species that has shown good cold hardiness here at Leu Gardens. It is native to a



Above: *Pandanus odorifer* growing at Flamingo Gardens in Davie (Broward County).

Right: Young *Pandanus dubius* growing at Leu Gardens.



wide region stretching from Indonesia to northeastern Australia to South Pacific islands and Hawaii. It grows 20-30 feet tall with straight trunks and large prop roots. The foliage is dark green and spiny. It is a very useful plant in its native habitat. The leaves are widely used for thatching and weaving while the fruits and seeds are consumed. It is very salt tolerant but is also tolerant of wet, shady locations.

Here at Leu Gardens, *Pandanus tectorius* has survived upper 20sF with only minor damage and has tolerated long cool/cold spells.

Freycinetia multiflora is the only member of Pandanaceae we have grown that didn't belong to *Pandanus*. This is a sprawling or clambering shrub that grows 5-6 feet without support and taller if there is other vegetation for it to climb through. It has very thin stems and small, narrow leaves. It is native to the forests in the Philippines and needs a shaded location. *Freycinetia multiflora* bears small inflorescences at the tip of the stems during the summer. The bracts are bright orange. This pandan is very sensitive to cold. We have tried it outside a few times and it always dies below 35-40F. Because



More Pandans growing at Leu Gardens. Left: Fruiting *Pandanus frucatus* (inset, fruit). Below: *Pandanus monothecha*. Bottom left: *Pandanus pygmaeus*.



of its smaller size, it makes a great container plant.

Freycinetia cumingiana is a very similar plant. There are many other species of *Freycinetia*. Most grow as climbing vines and some grow wild in New Zealand. These possibly could have some cold hardiness and would be worth trialing.

Here at Leu Gardens we started a collection of Pandanaceae 5 years ago. Seeds of quite a few species have become available in recent years. Many are unknown to cultivation so we want to grow these to test cold hardiness. Here is a report of what pandans survived and what died following the winter of 2009-2010. It was a very prolonged cold winter. December was very warm but it turned cold in early January. The absolute low was only 29F but the duration of cold in January set records. February and March was also much cooler than normal. Many plants did not show much injury for several weeks and slowly started to decline thereafter.

These are the stats for the cold spell in January. On the night (Jan. 10) it dropped to 29F it was below freezing for an amazing 12 hours. Also the nights of Jan. 10 and 11 had very heavy frost in the open areas. February had no nights below freezing but there were quite a few nights in the mid 30sF to the low 40sF and daytime highs only in the 50sF.



Jan. 1 68/47
 Jan. 2 58/39
 Jan. 3 47/36
 Jan. 4 52/33
 Jan. 5 47/35
 Jan. 6 50/31
 Jan. 7 61/30
 Jan. 8 59/38
 Jan. 9 41/31
 Jan. 10 45/29
 Jan. 11 53/30
 Jan. 12 58/32
 Jan. 13 63/36

The clear winners included *Pandanus furcatus*, *monotheca*, and *tectorius*. Here is a listing of all the pandan species we have/had growing and their conditions.

Freycinetia

F. multiflora, 3ft, killed. This is a very tender species. Previously it has been killed at temperatures below 35-40F. We have a good sized specimen in a container so I periodically divided a section off and plant it out in a very protected location.

Pandanus

P. amaryllifolius- 4ft, killed
P. baptistii- 5ft, killed
P. baptistii 'Aureus', 4ft, killed
P. conicus, 3ft, no damage
P. cookii, 3ft, no damage
P. dubius (pacificus), 4ft, killed

furcatus, several specimens from 4ft to 6ft and a 10ft specimen. The 10ft specimen is growing in the open and only suffered minor burn on older leaves. The younger specimens are growing in more protected locations and suffered no foliar burn but the center leaves pulled but are produced new growth in spring and recovered.

P. gemmiferus, 3ft, minor burn
P. monotheca, 3 specimens 4ft, 6ft, and 6ft, no damage

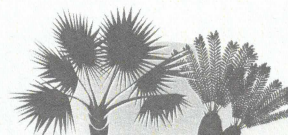


Left: *Pandanus tectorius* growing at Leu Gardens.

Below: *Freycinetia multiflora* flowers. Unfortunately, this species is much too tender for central Florida, but may be used as a patio plant if brought inside during cold snaps.



P. oblatus, 3ft, no damage
P. odifer (odoratissimus), 6ft, killed
P. pulcher, 3ft., minor burn
P. pygmaeus 'Variegatus', 1 ft., very minor damage
P. sanderi, 4ft., killed
P. solms-laubachii, 5ft., killed
P. tectorius, several specimens 10-15ft, little or no damage
P. utilis, 3 specimens, 7ft, 7ft, 20ft, the two 7ft specimens had minor damage, the 20 ft specimen suffered only minor damage but began declining in late spring and perished in summer
P. veitchii, 4ft, killed
P. whitei, 3ft, no damage
Pandanus sp. "Thai Spiral", 3ft, killed
Pandanus sp. (Saraburi, Thailand), 3ft, no damage



Summer Prospects or, PalmThanksgiving (maybe)...

By John Kennedy

Vero Beach, Florida

johnd.kennedy@yahoo.com

OK, what I do have to show for nine nights at freezing or below last winter (2010-11)? One dead *Elaeis guineensis* (9 feet of trunk), but was it dead after the winter before, 2009-10? Perhaps, very dead, although one long leaf still persists with still-green leaflets that have continued to give unreasonable hope. I have to remember that the top of a Queen Palm in a neighbor's yard snapped off last February and the leaves were green on the grounded crown more than two months afterward.

Other deaders: a very small *Mauritia flexuosa* that survived the 2009-10 winter cold, just couldn't make past the second winter. A small *Ptychosperma sanderianum* and a 3-foot *Veitchia joannis*, gift of Norm Moody, went to glory.

Unexpected survivors: *Mauritiella armata*, no trunk, leaves 3 feet high; *Astrocaryum standleyanum* (I think), 3 feet of trunk, returned from the seeming dead after being despaired of. My 30-foot *Veitchia arecina* still shows damage but is recovering strongly. *Carpentaria* the same size, minimal damage, though a small one died. Various *Archontophoenix*, most about 30 feet or so, suffered slight damage no longer visible. *Burretio kentia vieillardii*, 7 feet of trunk, shows a good bit of damage but sent up new leaves very quickly.

Arenga australasica, leaves to 15 feet, some top leaves damaged, many new leaves. A small *Arenga tremula* no damage, Slight damage to 4-foot high *Arenga* supposedly *westerhoutii* until it put up a sucker two years ago (no, not *tremula*, leaves not in a single plane). My rarest palm, *Oraniopsis appendiculata*, a rosette of leaves waist-high, trunkless after 20 years

in the ground, had one or two old brown leaves that were quickly discarded, followed by new growth. A couple of small *Satakentia* were badly damaged but not killed. The same for two big *Dypsis cabadae* and for a smaller *D. leptocheilos*.

Two big *Arenga engleri*, more than 20 years old, no sign of damage. Same for all species of *Livistona* (*saribus*, *rigida*, *fulva*, *decora*, *jenkinsiana*, *rotundifolia*) and for *Allagoptera arenaria*. However, *A. caudescens* had heavy damage, with recovery. *Sabals*—*causiarum*, *palmetto*, *minor*, *rosei*, *etonia*—fine. Slight damage to the big *Wodyetia*, significant damage to smaller recovering Foxtail. Various *Copernicia* species had no trouble with the cold, nor did *Syagrus macroglossa*, *oleracea*, or *botryophora*.

Now, if the rainy season had kicked in on time—early June, at latest—recovery might be far along and maybe some of the weaklings might have survived. As I write this (June 24th), there is a good chance of rain for Vero Beach: 40% or 50%. I take this to mean that chances are 6-4 that it won't rain or maybe 2-1 that it doesn't. After all, shouldn't I be content with the tenth of an inch two weeks ago? And, after all, there was an actual half inch four weeks ago! Think fun and exercise with the hose.

To look on the bright side, the Everglades are not **yet** on fire and the Asian Cycad Scale seems gone from all *Cycas revoluta* in Vero Beach!

Name That Palm!

If you are able to identify this palm, please contact CFPACS president Dave Reid – contact info on page 2.





Growing *Veitchia* in Central Florida

Article and photos by David Reid

Merritt Island, Florida

damy5@juno.com

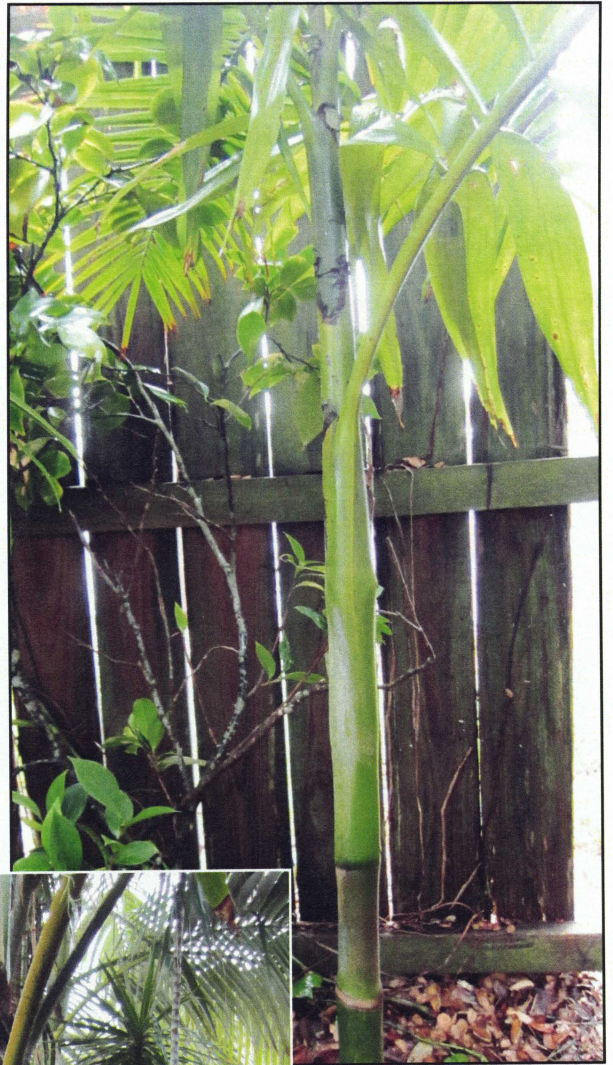
I had a brief working stint in Ft. Lauderdale installing home theaters in mansions and yachts, and while on break I would always gaze around and notice the rich tropical landscape. One palm that really stuck out to me was the *Veitchia*. It is a beautiful palm that seems to be flourishing in South Florida.

The local landscapers frustrated me all the time as I was constantly on a hunt for ripe seed. It seems they like to cut the flower stalks before they drop the seed to lower the maintenance on them. However, I did happen on some *Veitchia* growing in an unkempt building that was full of seeds. I collected the seed, and like a modern day Dr. David Fairchild, brought them further north to plant them at my house.

Veitchia are indigenous to the South Pacific islands and many species are considered endangered. There are a total of ten different varieties. I am growing *Veitchia arecina*, *V. joannis*, and *V. winin*.

Most are planted near the house under live oak canopy. A few of the palms are in full sun. I have found them to be moderately drought tolerant, however, they don't like to be dry for too long. Coming from mountainous rain forest, Central Florida doesn't provide enough moisture for these palms to thrive. I supplement them with my well water through the dry season. However, once it starts raining I refrain from watering the *Veitchia*.

I have found the *Veitchia* to be cold enough to survive the past 5 winters. I have never covered them or protected them. During the 2010 disastrous winter I thought I would lose them. They shed all their fronds but eventually recovered. I lost most of my tall Christmas palms (*Adonidia*



Veitchias growing in Dave Reid's garden.
Top: *Veitchia winin*
Left: *Veitchia joannis*
Facing page: *Veitchia arecina* in flower

merrillii) that winter. With that said, I think they are more cold tolerant than the Christmas palm. My tallest palm is a *Veitchia joannis*. It has grown about 5 feet above the roof line. My *Veitchia arecina* triple is now flowering for the first time. Their growth rate is fairly fast compared to other ornamental palms. In about 5 years they can reach around 10 feet.

Veitchia are very beautiful with a mix of greenish-gray trunk and whitish crownshaft. They look a lot like a Christmas palm from a distance but they grow quicker and taller. Mine are on a regular palm fertilizer schedule and have shown no nutrient deficiencies. They also make great patio palms. I have seen them in hotel and airport lobbies and I have had ones on my back porch that outgrew the ceiling.

I also have seen *Veitchia* at a garden tour in Palm Beach. These palms were 50 years old. They towered over everything and were very beautiful with red seeds and vibrant crownshafts. The palms were about 50 feet tall.

Thus, it seems the range of *Veitchia* may be anywhere that is sheltered and does not drop below 28F degrees. That is the lowest temperature I have seen since

More of Dave Reid's Veitchias.

Left: Veitchia arecina.

Below: Veitchia arcina inflorescence.

Facing page: Veitchia joannis.



growing *Veitchia*. A triple *Veitchia arecina*, (common name Montgomery Palm), has sentimental value to me. When my father was still alive we used to reminisce about the times we planted palms around our Satellite Beach home three decades ago. They were mostly sabals, queens, and sagos. In my dad's last trip to Florida, before he passed away, he helped plant a small triple Montgomery Palm. My dad was in poor health at the time, but was elated that he helped dig the hole and set the palms. In later years, when talking on the phone, he would always ask me how that palm was doing. The palm was an ice breaker into heavier conversations. Although my dad has since passed away, the palm is now flowering for the first time. I wish he was here to see it.

In conclusion, if you have a sheltered location for a beautiful tropical palm that will get around 20 feet then plant a *Veitchia*. Better yet, plant a bunch of them.

