

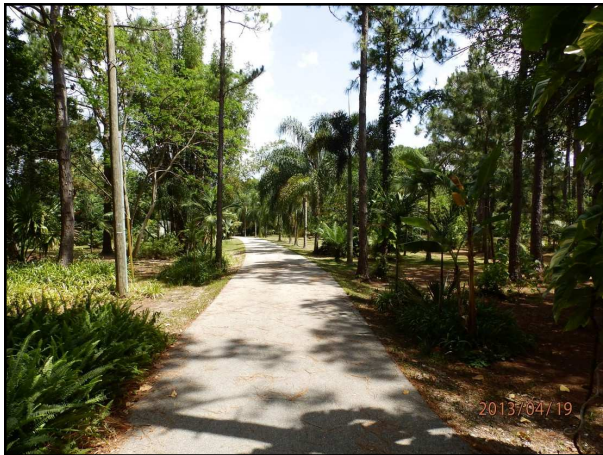
# The Palmateer

Volume 33, Number 2

Central Florida Palm & Cycad Society

June 2013

## June 8th Meeting: Lake Placid



*Follow the inviting Darnall driveway into the meeting, lots to see there.* (Photo by Walt)

**Save the date:** Saturday, June 8th. That's when CFPACS will meet at the Lake Placid garden of Walt & Cathy Darnall. Our chapter has been here previously—but 10 long years ago, in June 2003. Still the same place though much has changed, chiefly in the maturity of the palms and cycads. But the collection is also larger. Some significant cold events in subsequent years have been a learning experience that also must be incorporated into the narrative.

**The Board** will meet at 10:00 a.m. All members are welcome to attend. The general meeting—also known as the 'poking around'—is set to start at 11:00, with Walt taking everyone about his 5.60 acres to

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Meeting Report

### What We Did on March 23rd

**By John Kennedy**

**Who could** ask for anything more? A sunny day, warm but not hot, beautiful Earring Point on the Indian River lagoon. Orchid Island (as the barrier island is known) across from Wabasso and almost under the Wabasso Bridge. This first meeting since March 2012 drew more than 60 attendees and was overseen by smiling host, Anne Michael.

**With her** late husband Joe, the palm collecting began in the mid-1950s. The surviving palms from that era are mature and of a huge size not readily seen anywhere north, perhaps, of Fairchild. Over the years, CFPACS has sold Michael seeds from *Borassus aethiopum*, *Hyphaene coriacea*, *Bismarckia nobilis*, *Copernicia macroglossa*,

*(Continued on page 8)*

*Below, CFPACS visits Earring Point, Orchid Island on March 23rd. Not everyone is trailing along, stragglers in the greenery.* (Photo by Dave Reid)





Material for the September newsletter must be submitted by August 10th. Questions? Contact the Editor.

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**June 8<sup>th</sup> Schedule**

10:00 a.m. Board meeting  
 11:00 a.m. Meeting begins  
 12:15-1:30 p.m. Lunch there  
 1:30-2:00 p.m. Auction  
 2:00-2:30 p.m. Plant sale  
 After 2:30 p.m. Optional visit  
 To 3-acre peninsula property  
 on lake, 10 minutes away

**Walt & Cathy Darnall**  
 1621 Elm Terrace  
 Lake Placid, Florida  
 Home: 863-465-6615  
 Walt's cell: 863-214-5441  
 Cathy's cell: 863-441-3850

## The Palmateer

**The Palmateer** is published four times a year: March, June, September, and December by Central Florida Palm & Cycad Society, a chapter of the International Palm Society and of The Cycad Society. The views expressed are not the official positions of the society nor of its Board. No material may be reprinted or reproduced without permission.

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The closing date for submission of material for the next issue is the 1st of the month preceding publication.

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**Directions to Darnalls', Lake Placid**

From Ft. Pierce: SR 70 east (Okeechobee Rd.) to U.S. 27, then north for seven miles to Lake Placid. Make right at first traffic light (CR 621/Interlake Blvd.) Go one mile on CR 621, make left onto Lake Clay Drive. Go one mile and make right onto Oak Ave. Go one mile and make left onto Elm Terrace. Go to second driveway (1621 Elm Terrace) on right that has two *Sabal palmetto* islands flanking it. Drive back onto property.

From Orlando: I-4 west to U.S. 27. South on U.S. 27 to Lake Placid. At second traffic light turn left onto CR 621/Interlake Blvd. Go one mile on CR 621, make left onto Lake Clay Drive. Go one mile and make right onto Oak Ave. Go one mile and make left onto Elm Terrace. Go to second driveway on right (1621 Elm Terrace) that has two *Sabal palmetto* islands flanking it. Drive back onto property.

From St. Pete/Tampa: I-75 south to east on SR 64 (to Zolfo Springs). At Zolfo Springs, make right (south) on U.S. 17 and go approximately 1/2 mile and make left (east) onto SR 66. Proceed to U.S. 27 and make right (south) and proceed down to Lake Placid. At second traffic light turn left onto CR 621/Interlake Blvd. Go one mile on Rt. 621, make left onto Lake Clay Drive. Go one mile and make right onto Oak Ave. Go one mile and make left onto Elm Terrace. Go to second driveway on right (1621 Elm Terrace) that has two *Sabal palmetto* islands flanking it. Drive back onto property.

**June 8th Meeting: Lake Placid**

*(Continued from page 1)*

point out new plantings and how much the older have grown.

**Lunch will** be on-site, about 12:15. Fried chicken, iced tea, some salads will be provided by the chapter. Attendees are encouraged to bring a non-dessert side dish.

**At 1:30 p.m.**, the plant auction will begin, followed by the sale. Donations for the auction are welcome. Vendors need to contact Maryann Krisovitch (treasurer@cfpacs.org) for clearance.

**An optional** visit to a peninsula garden filled with tropicals will follow the plant sale.

**Those who** haven't visited Lake Placid before will find that it is a pretty little town set amid several lakes that not only add to the scenic qualities but also provide microclimates, as well. However, the Darnalls do not live on a lake.

**Walt's experience** dealing with freezes over the years is similar to those of many CFPACS members in the interior who have not had the benefit of living along the coast or on the east side of a lakeshore. He will be telling us what he has learned over the years and his basic preventive measures for winter cold.

**Directions to** the Darnall property are **in the left column on this page.**

**Your editor** asked the host for a description of his property and of his collection. His reply is worth reading in full. See next page.

Once back onto main property, park on any grassed areas (including front yard). It's just bahia grass with no irrigation to damage.

**Contact numbers:**

Home: 863-465-6615

Walt's cell: 863-214-5441

## What We Have in Lake Placid

**By Walt Darnall**

**Our property** comprises 5.60 acres. Approximately 50% of the property is mostly open, with palms planted here and there. The other 50% is lightly wooded and natural scrub land (i.e., saw palmettos and slash pines), with numerous foot paths.

**Within the** naturally wooded areas we have planted various species of palms and tropical plants, as this area is generally warmer and less frost prone on the coldest winter nights.

***Serenoa repens*** and ***Sabal etonia*** abound naturally on our property, along with maybe a dozen or so ***Sabal palmetto***.

**In terms** of introduced palms, we have approximately 75 species, mostly in the *Syagrus*, *Livistona*, *Phoenix*, *Archontophoenix*, *Caryota*, *Wodyetia*, *Dypsis*, and *Bismarckia* genera. Over the years I've probably lost close to 40 species of palms that proved to be too cold/frost tender for my climate.

**We also** have several species of cycads, plus numerous tropical plants, such as white bird of paradise, traveler's palms, dracaena, cordylines, anthuriums, alocasia, many species of bamboo, tropical vines, flowering trees and shrubs, etc.

**My most** prized palms would be my largest *Bismarckia nobilis*, *Archontophoenix alexandrae*, *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*, *Syagrus botryophora*, *Dypsis leptocheilos*, and *Roystonea regia*. (Sadly, I just recently lost a 37 feet tall *Caryota urens* that was topped by a gust of wind.)

**The USDA** hardiness zone for my property is 9b (low end). However, the town of Lake Placid (less than 2 miles away) is solidly in zone 10 due to its relative elevation on the Lake Wales Ridge, where it benefits from the warm air inversion layer.



Another glimpse of the Darnall property.  
(Photo by the Owner)

**Also, most** residential areas fronting the more than 100 lakes in Highlands County enjoy a solid zone 10 climate due to the thermal effect of the water.

**Since the** last CFPACS meeting here in June of 2003, my property has experienced a notable transformation for three reasons:

**One, most** of the palms that I had growing in 2003 are now mature.

**Two, I've** acquired many more species of palms and plants so as to diversify my garden.

**Three, my** landscape changed dramatically about five years ago when I lost virtually all my red bay (*Persea borbonia*), silk bay (*Persea humilis*) and swamp bay (*Persea palustris*) to the Laurel Wilt disease that has devastated the *Persea* genus throughout the Southeastern US. These clumps of trees used to provide valuable canopy for many frost tender palms and plants. However, I've replaced some of the lost trees with trees of a different species, plus many more palm plantings to fill in the gaps.



*Below, a scene in Lake Placid—royals on Lake Clay, one of many lakes in Highlands County.*

*(Photo by Walt Darnall)*



**Remember that you can ZOOM in to enlarge pictures and stories in this online publication.**



*Above, sign greeting visitors to Earring Point on March 23rd.*

*(Photo by Lek Wallace)*

## Palm Points

*Individual “Palm Points” were first published in the March 2002 issue of The Palmateer. The spots were broadcast for about three years, starting in April 2001, on the public radio station at what is now Indian River State College in Fort Pierce until a new station manager arrived who eliminated these and the several continuing spots on gardening. The total number ran to 73, though the station repeatedly broadcast the first 25. Palm Points were intended to supply basic information for beginners with palms. The spots could be no longer than 42 seconds. At the time when these were written and broadcast, your Editor was a full-time faculty member at the college.*

### **Palm Points #1 Palms in Florida**

**When Americans** think of Florida, they think of a tropical place, with palms waving in the balmy breezes. Florida has **many** palms, whether Florida is truly tropical can be argued. The Sabal palm—commonly called the Cabbage Palm—is the Florida State Tree.

**While millions** of palms grow here, most are probably from 6 or 7 species. Yet there are about 2800 species of palms.

**Palms never** look quite real to Northerners. Indeed, palms are a little unreal (however beautiful).

**For one** thing, palms are not really trees but are related to grasses, to onions, to lilies.

**Caring for** palms and identifying some uncommon palms will be the subject of these talks.

### **Palm Points #2 Palm Botany, Part One**

**It's true.** Palms are not woody and are not trees, but are related to grasses, onions, and lilies. Trees have a cambium layer under the bark. The tree trunk expands as the

*(Continued on page 7)*

## *Zamia inermis*



*An attractive cycad, Zamia inermis, picture site not disclosed, likely in the extensive Holton collection.*

**By Dale Holton**

***Zamia inermis*** was named in 1983. It is from the Mexican State of Veracruz, District of Ac-topan. It is very endangered in habitat, due to land clearing for cattle grazing. It is now only found on rocky outcrops and cliffs. There is very little regeneration due to loss of natural pollinators.

**The plants** can have stems of 3' or more, but usually lay over when they get too tall. The leaves can be 3' to 4' or more. In cultivation, they can reach 5'. Each leaf can have 25-35 leaflets. Leaves and leaf stems are free of any sharp prickles. The plants grow in dry very poor volcanic soil at 500' to 1000' elevation.

**I obtained** my first plants in the early 90s. the only person that had any for sale was Loren Whitelock and they were \$35 for one leaf seedlings. My plants are now large and have been coning for the last four years.

These plants are very hardy and survive quite well without any irrigation. They are not affected by our winter cold spells in Palm Beach County.

**Tom Broome** says they won't survive the winters up where he lives. They would make nice pot plants that could be protected during cold spells. They don't seem to get mealy bug or scale problems. With each new leaf flush, the plants get a little taller. I think that if the old leaves were cut off every two years, the plants would stay shorter and be more attractive. I have found that hand pollination is very effective and produces about 70% or more germination. The seeds are quite large and easily germinated. The seedlings start out somewhat slowly but speed up after a year or two. This is a great plant to use in any garden here in south Florida. Usually only available in specialty nurseries.

## Palm Points

(Continued from page 5)

cambium gets larger.

**Palms don't** have a cambium layer. For the most part, when a seedling palm forms a trunk and emerges from the ground, the trunk is as wide as it will ever be. (There are some exceptions.)

**Palms don't** have bark, though they may have the remains of old leaf stalks on the trunk. What's visible on the outside is a weathered version of what's inside the trunk.

**Palm Points #6 Planting a Palm, Part Three**  
**Before planting** a palm, find out how big it will get.

**How much** bigger? **Look up!** Is there an electric line overhead? That little palm may grow right into the line, sooner than you think. If the little palm is planted close to the wall of the house, it may quickly grow larger than the space to which it's confined.

### NEW CYCAD

Montgomery Botanical Center announced in the Spring/Summer 2013 issue of *Montgomery Botanical News*, the discovery a new cycad species in Colombia. It has been named *Zamia huilensis* in honor of the Colombian department in which it was found, Huila.

**The reproductive** structures are reportedly similar to those of *Z. tolimensis* found last year in the neighboring department of Tolima. However, the leaflets--according to the Montgomery report--are similar to *Z. muricata* from Colombia's eastern plains.

**This is** the fourth new *Zamia* species discovered in Colombia in four years.

**A small** palm planted too close to the front walk can turn into an obstacle for visitors.

**Always find** out how tall the palm will grow and what is the eventual spread of its leaves. Palms can't be used—except very temporarily—as groundcovers. They won't stay low all that long.

### Palm Points #7 Palm Features, Leaves and Trunks, Part One

**The fronds** of *pinnate* palms have a stem from which leaflets are attached on either side. Sometimes these are called feather palms. Queen palms and coconut palms are *pinnate*.

**Palmate palms** have leaves the shape of a hand.

**Sometimes these** are called fan palms. *Washingtonias* and Chinese Fan Palms are *palmate*.

**The native** Cabbage Palm is more than palmate. Because the stem doesn't stop at the edge of the leaf but extends into it, causing the leaf to have a fold, this is called a *co-stapalmate* leaf.



*The town of Lake Placid is in the center of the state but offers some surprises, such as a mature coconut palm on the shore of Lake Grassy.*

(Photo by Walt Darnall)



## What We Did on March 23rd

(Continued from page 1)

*Attalea speciosa*, *Corypha utan*, *Latania lontaroides*.

**There are** fewer palms now than long ago, victims of freezes in the 1980s, replacements not made because of Lethal Yellowing in the then nearly sole source of palms, Miami. In 2006, CFPACS members donated and planted more than 20 palms of at least a dozen species, though not all of these have survived.

**The location** has to be the most favorable in Central Florida for growing palms: on the west side of the barrier island separated from the mainland by the mile-wide Indian River; tidal marshes, filled with mangroves surround the point on north, east, and south sides. Access—other than by boat—is by a 50-yard driveway from Jungle Trail, an unpaved historic roadway. The Michaels have been in this place since 1887, as a large marker on the property explains.

**Leading the** group tour of the 5-acre property was Jason Baker who has collected seeds generously donated for many years by the Michaels to our Seed Bank and who was involved in the newer palm plantings.

**Anne Michael** accompanied the group in her golf cart, lending additions to Jason's information and the occasional ride to older members.

\* \* \* \*

**It's hard** to believe that Ron Eward's property—the afternoon stop—is 'only' three acres. The street is behind the house (north) and the land slopes down behind the deck across a lawn to Goat Creek. The visitor will note a gazebo to the left (facing the creek) and a walkway and dock straight ahead. There are a few palms, but nothing in numbers.



Looking around at the Michael place: right foreground, Rob Branch. Center, East vp Janice Broda with Martha & Roger Willoughby. Left in red shirt, Sue Reilly with her visiting parents, Bill & Ann Reilly.

(Photo by Lek Wallace)



Anne Michael gives Lyle Niswander a lift in her golf cart. Below, visitors eye an old Copernicia macroglossa, Petticoat Palm.

(Photos by Lek Wallace)







Ron Eward (right) on the trail with Carol Niswander (left), new members Barbara & Eric Katz (center).  
(Photo by Lek Wallace)



James Fletcher admires *Kerriodoxa elegans* on Ron's trail.  
(Photo by Dave Reid)



What the membership is really good at: standing around (after exhaustive palm tour at Ron's).  
(Photo by Lek Wallace)

## What We Did on March 23rd

(Continued from page 8)

**However,** on the west side of the lawn are trees/shrubs/*palms* with a pathway visible. Enter there and it's a jungle of palms, bamboos, crotons, a couple of sizeable live oaks. This part of the property is a peninsula, with arms of Goat Creek to the west and north. As Ron explains, this creates a microclimate favorable for tropicals that might not do well in an open, drier locale. Nor does it hurt, of course, that the Indian River lagoon is less than a mile to the east. Since the straight line of sight in the peninsula is no more than 10-15 feet before the path bends, the area seems larger than it actually is.

**Looking at** the 'jungle' containing most of the palms, it's also difficult to believe that in 1998, when Ron arrived, the whole property was a field. What the visitors marveled at has been created since that time. This was the third CFPACS visit to Ron's Sanctuary (2007 and 2009) and each time there's more! Ron has made a point of showy plantings along Goat Creek, anticipating (he says) canoers or kayakers being given a show for their efforts. This may be more plausible than is first apparent, for a big house on the property west of Ron's—beyond the peninsula—is being converted into a bed & breakfast.

**OK, What's** there? A number of big royal palms, many *Archontophoenix* of several species, together with quite a few *Livistonas* of various species and a number of oddities, such as a small *Gastrococcas crispera* on one side of the lawn (don't fall into it: lovely spines). Oh, yes, how about the *Areca triandra*? Yes, the flowers are aromatic. And 25 species of bamboo and lots of crotons.

—John Kennedy

## Another *Dypsis*—*D. fasciculata*



Bill Beattie, who lives in Oz (Queensland, to be exact), has made several missions to Madagascar in company with like-minded high-spirited palm explorers. He is mulling his next trip there. His pictures here.

### By Bill Beattie- *Dypsis fasciculata*.

A **variable** species most often but not always found on the Madagascar Eastern coastal white sands. Usually solitary but occasionally clustering. Stems can reach >10m in soils other than 'white sands'. Juveniles appear very similar to *D. nodifera* and sometimes even with entire leaves but once the main stem(s) develop all changes.

**The leaves** can be finely divided and grouped as illustrated or with fewer, broader leaflets. The stems are tough and flexible and with age often rest on other flora.

**Surprisingly...**the brilliant red staminate flowers, the flowering to two orders but often one, are not mentioned in POM [*Palms of Madagascar*] and neither are the numerous stubs of 'yet to be inflorescences' that line the stem(s). Some of them



years away from maturity! For me these are the real keys...the first things to think about! A palm tolerant of anything that nature can throw at it.....except 10C [50F] or less.



## President's Message

**After** a couple of dry years with not much going on, I'm delighted to report that CFPACS is once again in full swing with lots of new (and lapsed) members coming on board.

**Just as** exciting as the burgeoning membership roster is the full program ahead of fascinating tours of *private* garden not many people get to see. In a few days we will converge on Walt and Cathy Darnall's 5.6 acre tropical paradise in a climate-challenging area near Lake Placid. After a sumptuous lunch and plant auction and sale, Walt will lead us to another nearby garden complete with a bird aviary.

**Have you** ever seen miniature cattle up close and personal? Your chance will come in September when we gather in the Myakka City area way "out east" of Bradenton and Sarasota, first near Faith Bishock's place, then on to the Presley ranch/nursery where the cattle graze. Catherine Presley, a talented cook, promises to whip up an old fashioned Florida barbecue for us.

**The Lake** Placid event comes hard on the heels of our March gathering at the Michael family's historic home on exclusive Earring Point and Ron Eward's amazing garden in Valkaria.



**This renewed** excitement in CFPACS is no accident. Every board member is deeply involved in making our organization relevant and helpful to its members. Then too, the indomitable John Kennedy, Susie Dow and the Maryann Krisovitch/Ron Hart team have been highly visible at various other plant events around the state handing out brochures and talking about our Society.

**Is it** all worthwhile? I think so or I, personally, wouldn't be here. CFPACS has been critical to my evolution from newbie with a bare yard to one with a six-year-old garden chock full of interesting palms and cycads picked up at our plant auctions for very little money. More important than price tag, though, has been the ability to tap the society's extensive, statewide network for unusual palms not available at the local big box store and for advice from people who know what they're doing.

**I also** enjoy germinating seeds. Thanks to our unique Seed Bank, I have access to dozens of rare species collected from their own trees by generous members.

**Despite** a full library of palm books, I'm a doofus when it comes to identifying plants in habitat. Solution: email a picture to one of our Member Experts for the answer.

**There are** plenty of other members just like me who appreciate the treasure that is CFPACS. Our Society has been around for almost 50 years serving as a priceless resource... and with the Plant Gods smiling on us, it will still be here half a century from now.

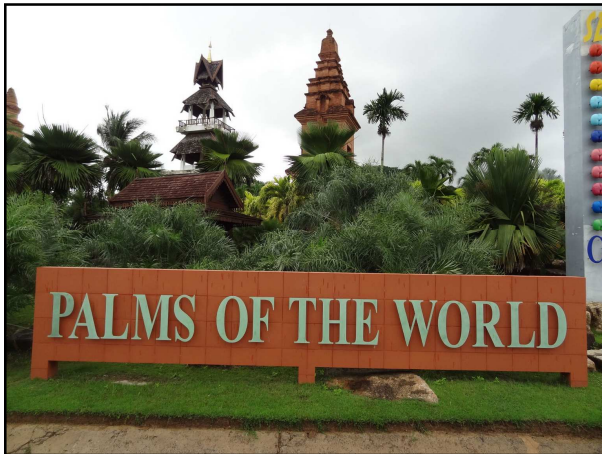
**See you** at Walt's place on June 8<sup>th</sup>.

—Lucinda McCartney

*No, not a palm or a cycad. Occasionally we do show other forms of plant life. This is quite a big Fiddleleaf Fig (Ficus lyrata), a testimonial to usually mild winters in Lake Placid.*  
(Photo by Walt Darnall)



## **Nongnooch Pattaya Tropical Garden & Resort, Thailand** **The IPS September 2012 Biennial**



**By Geri Prall**

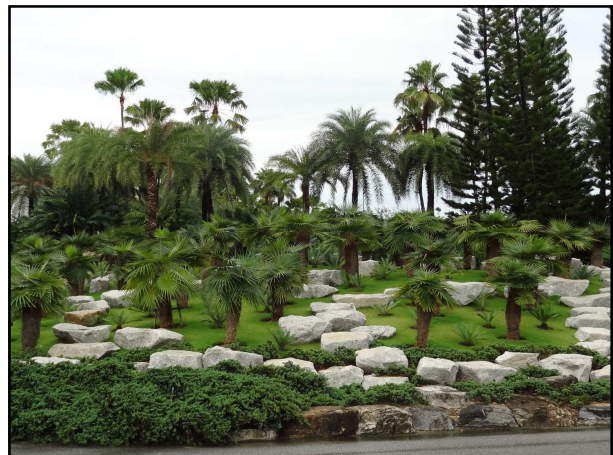
**Kampon Tansacha**, our host and director of Nongnooch, succeeded in making this the best biennial of all times. From the police escort for the seven tour buses to the fireworks display at the closing banquet, it was “over the top.” Along with our memories, we were given many gifts: a book detailing the story of the gardens with color photos, a multi-year photo calendar, CD with photos of the biennial, a group photo, as well as some other “party favors”. All meals were grand buffets – the evening dinners had elaborate entertainment. Beside the standard cold water at break spots, we given cold towels and served ice cream by the “pretties” (young models which many of the guys wanted to bring home in their suitcase).

**The IPS** attendees were all given the VIP treatment at NNBG. We were quick to learn the benefits of wearing the IPS badge. Not only were a lot of photos taken of the plants,

*(Continued on page 13)*



*Above, Geri & Dave Prall on elephant at Nongnooch. (How can Miami top this in the 2014 Biennial?) Below, mass planting—a hillside of Old Man Palms (*Coccothrinax crinita*). All photos but two taken by Geri.*





Left, bonsai at Nongnooch. Note the array of *Copernicia hospita* (or hybrids of *hospita*) in the background. Below, *Bismarckia nobilis* 'Baitid'.

(Continued from page 12)

we also posed with tigers and elephants. The IPS was given a special elephant show, afterwards attendees were uplifted in the elephants' trunk.s.

**Nongnooch** is very unique. Just how many gardens can you tour by elephant ? It is a collector's dream to have the ways & means as well as the climate to grow an immense collection of plants. There were some rare specimens and variations of palms, such as *Bismarckia nobilis* 'Baitid' with its unusual shaped fronds (see photo at right) .

If you didn't want to use your VIP badge to get a ride, you could walk on the covered aerial walkways from the resort to the restaurants and garden areas. It was a great vantage point for photography and also to get an interesting perspective view from the tops of the trees.

**There are** many beautifully landscaped areas that draw a multitude of tourists. It's a Disney World of plants. There are many garden areas including Palms of the World, the French Garden, elevated Bonsai displays, floating gardens, Cactus, Orchid & Bromeliad, and even a Stonehenge Garden. We



also toured areas that were off limits to the general public like Hortus which contains some very rare plants and an almost complete cycad collection. There is also a collection of variegated Japanese *Rhapis*.

**We watched** the workers pot up *Cyrtostachys renda*. There were several va-

(Continued on page 14)



## More Scenes from the 2012 IPS Biennial



*Left, rare palm area. Below, group photo.  
Where's Waldo? Or prez Lucinda and her son Bob?  
Sixth row, 8th & 9th from the left?*



*Left, yes, that's a Hyphaene. Below, visitors provided  
with umbrellas for tour.*



### IPS 2012 Biennial

*(Continued from page 13)*

gated specimens as well as seedlings that caught our eye.

**Weather** for the most part was very pleasant. We did have a few showers. The NNBG staff provided us with umbrellas (*see photo at right*). The staff lined up along the pathway to the restaurant holding huge umbrellas so that we wouldn't get wet.

**Anyone can** visit NNBG, but you would be missing out on the VIP treatment the IPS biennial attendees received.

**If you** want to see more photos and read more about the biennial, there are a lot of posts on [www.Palmtalk.org/forum](http://www.Palmtalk.org/forum) under IPS Biennials.



# Reflections on Favorite Palms

**By Ron Eward**

(reprinted from June 2007 issue of *The Palmateer*), host on March 23rd)

**Asking** a palm enthusiast for his or her ten favorite palms must be akin to asking a Mother to rank her children or a cat lover with five cats to prioritize them in the order that they could live without them. Indeed, palms are similar to cats in that they're all different and it's the variety that augments the value of them all. Kinda like the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. Say you have a nice palm grouping of five or six palms and wonder which one could be removed that would have minimal impact on the grouping. You see the difficulty? Well, I'm one of those that could never pick a favorite color or song or anything (it was a big game in the 1950's) and usually refuse requests to pick favorites. I'm rather eclectic and this trait will manifest itself in my garden.

**Having said** that, John Kennedy's request inspired some ponderings. Sauntering through my Sanctuary, I reflected on this. I realized I could easier select my ten most favored *features* or *aspects* about palms than pick the favorite palms, which I will confess at the outset that I could only reduce to twelve, not ten. (Told you I wasn't any good at this game!)

**So I** began by examining what are some of the favorite things I like about palms. Possibly, this exercise would help me narrow some favorites. Here are ten features I like in no particular order:

- **Tropical Look** – What better for that tropical feeling than palms? As a Ft. Lauderdale native, born and raised, I would have to have Coco-nuts and Royals high on my list.
- **Majestic Qualities** – Stately appearances, bold statements provided by large dominating palms in the canopy.
- **Color/Hue** – This can relate to trunk, crownshaft, new fronds or seeds. Color can be used in a variety of ways to merge with other residents in your garden. For example, an *Areca catechu* ALBA with its yellow hue is located close to two large Tropical Black bamboos for an interesting effect.
- **Trunk/Crownshaft** – Many palms curry favor due to say, attractive ring scars or colorful crownshafts. Most get prettier as they mature

which will affect any temporal ordering. Combine this aspect with color/hue and you will be drawn to *Pinanga adangensis* with its ivory crownshaft or *Dypsis cabadae* for a blue-green effect let alone the appeal of *Cyrtostachys renda* which I have lost due to cold.

- **Masculine Aspects**—Some palms just look masculine and some more delicate and feminine. A mix is nice. Here, we would choose the sturdy, mighty trunks with erect lamina and leaflets such as *Bismarckias*, some of the *Copernicias*, especially *baileyana*, and *Borassus*.
- **Feminine Aspects**—There are those palms that are more delicate and graceful, possibly frilly looking or just plain sexy. Here, *Dypsis onilahensis* or *ambositrae* come to mind. Compare a *D. onilahensis* to a *Bismarckia nobilis* to grasp the masculine vs. feminine looking aspects.
- **Weeping Willow Look**—These are some of my favorites as a third to a half of the lamina droops and creates a whispering, spidery effect. My favorite is *Livistona decipiens* but the effect can be enjoyed with *Liv. benthamii* or *Liv. chinensis*.
- **Fragrance**—I have researched and found twenty two palms with fragrant inflorescences. Notwithstanding, I have only experienced two but the garden has five. But once you have whiffed the lemon fragrance of *Areca triandra*, you will want to fill your garden with them. Alas, I only have two now and one blooming.
- **Unique Appearance/Feature**—We all know these standouts due to unique trunks (belly, bottle, flask, spindle, etc.) or the fronds are oriented to one plane or three (Triangle).
- **Personal Appeal/Sentiment/Bias** -- Well, this category recognizes we may favor certain palms for personal reasons that have nothing to do with the above. I like *Ptychosperma macarthurii* simply 'cause I fell in love with them in Singapore. I have several yet it didn't

(Continued on page 16)

## Reflections on Favorite Palms

(Continued from page 15)

make my list of twelve, which shows the folly of picking favorites.

With these criteria in mind, I selected this list of twelve favorites based on those that exhibited at least three of the above criteria. This made it possible to exclude a palm that may be a personal favorite but for only one aspect. For example, *Livistona decipiens* wins out over the other *Livs* cause it combines the weeping look with a beautiful ringed trunk (after the sheathes fall) and is tropical and majestic. Once again, in no particular order:

1. *Cocos nucifera* -- Hey, I'm from Ft. Lauderdale and I like coconut.
2. *Dypsis decaryi* -- The Triangle combines masculine and feminine features with a unique appearance.
3. *Livistona decipiens* [decora] -- for that weeping visual effect. To quote Riffle/Craft: "The leaf crown provides one of the most beautiful silhouettes and its canopy-scape is almost spellbinding."
4. *Borassodendron machadonis* -- Pin wheel-like, corrugated leaves gives a *Licuala* top to a large frame. Imagine a cross among *Borassus*, *Licuala* and *Chelyocarpus*. Very unique looking.
5. *Clinostigma samoense* -- Tropical and stately with one of the most beautiful leaf crowns.
6. *Pelagodoxa henryana* -- Large, undivided, linear obovate leaves in rounded crown creates special effect.
7. *Satakentia liukuensis* -- Tropical, majestic, bold statement.
8. *Dypsis lastelliana/leptocheilos* -- Teddy Bear palm but not sure which I've got. By the book, looks more like *lepto*. Beautiful crown with prominent white rings under crownshaft with unique teddy bear feel makes it a crowd pleaser and looks outstanding in the garden.
9. *Kerriodoxa elegans* -- AKA White Elephant or Elephant Ear palm. Possibly the most beautiful, large palmate leaves, white underneath with almost black petioles (actually dark green). Leaves will get 7-8 ft. in diameter. A real treat.



*Sabal domingensis* on the north coast of the Dominican Republic. Opposite page, palms trimmed for thatch near house. (Photo by Bob Blenker)

- 
10. *Bismarckia nobilis* -- Beautiful in both silver and blue-green forms. Majestic, masculine, a force to be reckoned with.
  11. *Archontophoenix alexandrae* -- The King palms are well named. Both majestic and graceful with straight trunks and prominent crownshafts. A smaller Royal, they look good intermixed.
  12. *Areca triandra* -- Delightful, strong lemon fragrance makes it a favorite. I remember when I first smelled the fragrance and tried to figure where it was coming from. Nice surprise when source discovered. Have met many palm people who aren't aware of this aspect.

## Close Encounters with Palms Around the World:

Very un-scientific vignettes about members of the third most important plant family and their uses in the tropics

By Bob Blenker

**Long before** I could recognize the difference between a *Sabal* and a *Syagrus*, or a *Corypha* and a *Carpoxylon*, and long before my exposure to the arcane and odd world of “palmophilia” my interest in palms could be summed up by a few simple questions: Can you eat it? Does it produce fiber? Can you build with it?

**Having lived** in the developing world for most the ‘80s and ‘90s, and the 2000s, discussion regarding palms typically centered on their uses in the everyday lives of the people with whom I shared my meals or living space. What follows is a glimpse into those lives with palms.

**Vino de Coyal, Guanacaste, Costa Rica:** Imbibing *coyol*, or palm wine, was my first experience “eating”, or in this case, drinking a product of a palm tree. In celebration of the change of seasons, the leaves of the *Attalea butyracea* are harvested for re-thatching roofs. At the same time, a few select specimens are felled and hauled to places where local people gather. (This is not to be confused with the “*coyol*” made from fermenting the seeds of the *Acrocomia aculeata*.) A small basin, called a “*pileta*”, is hollowed out at one end of the trunk using a machete, axe or adz. The end of the trunk with the hollow is then elevated slightly, and the trunk is left in the sun to ferment. A few days later, a frothy, sticky, and sometimes viscous liquor has collected in the small hollow – as have numerous insects seeking the liquid, but finding only their deaths by drowning. When the “*Cacique*” or chief announces that the



*coyol* is ready, local residents, with hair in long, black braids, collect in circles on the packed dirt floor or on low wooden stools, under the great, multi-storied palm-thatched roofs of the grand *palenques* of Guanacaste. The *Cacique* signals that it is time to begin, and in turns, each villager walks to the palm trunk, and sucks up a drink of the fermented sap through a long reed with a ball of wild cotton stuck to the end (to strain out the drowned bugs). As the drinking goes on, people tell stories, sing songs and socialize. This *coyol*, has an intoxicating effect which, according to some observers, can last for days – waning during the daylight hours, only to intoxicate again with nightfall. Or, maybe this is just a good excuse for a three-day binge in a place where the pace of life is slow and not much else happens!

(Continued on page 18)





*Landscape, with palms, Dominican Republic.  
(Photo by Bob Blenker)*

## Close Encounters with Palms

*(Continued from page 17)*

**Sweet Dates in the Light of Hale-Bopp Comet, Northern Sahara, Southern Morocco Border (or maybe Mauritania):** Mustafa brings the huge hammered tin tray of almond-stuffed dates to the firelight where we sip mint tea in front of the red and white striped tent after our dinner of mutton cous-cous *tajine*. Sitting on ornate carpets laid on the warm sand under the glimmering brightness of the Hale-Bopp comet working its way through the obsidian Saharan night sky, the sweet dates melt in our mouths, mixing with the creamy almond paste filling. We are camped miles from any settlement. But, the dates are a gift from the Emir of the region, having been harvested from the carefully irrigated and tended date gardens of the mud citadel. Learning that “*Franj*” visitors, a term for foreigners dating back to the Crusades and Saladin, were in his principality, he sent his messenger to welcome us, bearing the fruits of his palms. Surrounded by towering, trackless sand dunes stirred upon only by the hamatan winds with the sound of the occasional camel to mark the night, Mustafa’s brother Samir talks about dates.

He explains in a mix of French and Arabic that more than simple horticultural adornments for the garden, the various species of date palms represent life and prosperity for the people of harsh and unforgiving lands of North Africa. “They give us shade from the burning sun, food when we are hungry, and sweet sap to quench our thirst (that is sometimes fermented against Koranic law),” he said, “and they have great value. We sell the trees themselves north and south. They travel great distances on large trucks.” “Tending to the dates is an honorable profession, and to receive the fruit of the palm is a sign of respect and demonstration of hospitality from the Emir,” he said. “After all, by our law, if the Emir offers you food and drink, he may not execute you!” he says brightly.

*(Continued on page 19)*



*Mike Harris of Caribbean Palms in Loxahatchee has identified this palm in the Dominican Republic as Coccolrinax argentea. Makes sense, look at all the silver.  
(Photo by Bob Blenker)*



Plaza de la Republica in Lima, Peru. Those are *Roystonea oleracea*.

(Photo by Bob Blenker)

## Close Encounters with Palms

(Continued from page 18)

**Pejibaye, San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua:** It would be false to say that *pejibaye* (*Bactris gasipaes*) is my favorite fruit. Simmering in giant, steaming cast iron sugar cauldrons over low, open fires, the yellow fruit of the Peach Palm, or *pejibaye* roil in a red, oily liquor. Their earthy, pungent smell permeates the open-air market. Tasting of starch and soil and oil, the *pejibaye* is a seasonal favorite, just as roasted chestnuts are in more northern climes – and come to think of it, the taste is somewhat similar. Shouldering heavy, white rice sacks full of the oily fruit, plantation and forest workers come to the small towns of the border region tucked between Lago Nicaragua and the frontier with Costa Rica. As the oven-like heat of the day fades, the *campesinos* stash their ever-present machetes, for a chance to drink the local *aguardiente*, a raw rum, and peel the fleshy fruit from the palm seed with gleaming white teeth, enjoying the *pejibaye* feast. And, if they are lucky, they get to dance to the music of a marimba with a beautiful

brown-skinned woman in a flowing, white skirt (or as is more common these days, tight shorts and an American designer t-shirt).

**The Octogenarian and the Talipot, Dominica, West Indies:** Towering forty feet above the rooftop of the old Parliament building across the street from the dark, blue Atlantic sea, the enormous inflorescence of the *Corypha umbraculifera* drops its multiplicity of fruit. “Are those soursops,” I ask the elderly gentleman sitting on the bench in the dappled shade of the brightly flowering flamboyant. “No mon,” he says in a heavy West Indian accent colored with shades of French creole, “dat’s a talipot. I was just a small boy when the governor planted it.” “When was that,” I ask? “I was eight, and I am nearly ninety now.” “All dem talipot trees in town be flowering, den dey die!” he added. They were all planted by a colonial governor, decades before Dominica’s independence. And sure enough, I counted more than nine of the stately talipots around Roseau, all in various stages of flowering, dropping tons of quarter-sized, lime green fruit over yards, and walkways and roads. For nearly a year, I watched them flower and seed after which one-by-one they seemed to dissolve from the inside and collapse on themselves – sometimes with catastrophic results as was the case when one of the massive 70 to 80 foot tall behemoths fell on a small, tin shack inhabited by the local juice seller. Fortunately he was not home at the time.

**Palma de Techo (Roof Palm), Guzmancitos, Dominican Republic:** On a routine trip to visit a meteorological tower collecting wind-data for a wind farm on the North Coast of the Dominican Republic I come upon Elpidio. Elpidio is a local big man, respected by most and responsible for helping organize small

(Continued on page 20)

## Close Encounters with Palms

(Continued from page 19)

landowners around the wind project. That warm day, with the trades blowing off the blue water of the Muchoir Bank and the Turks and Caicos Islands, he is trimming the lower green leaves from a large sabal palm (*Sabal domingensis*). He explained that a good palm thatch roof lasts 20 years if properly prepared. And, he prefers a thatch roof to one of shiny galvanized steel. "It's cooler and doesn't make so much noise in the rainy season," he added. After choosing a candidate palm, Elpidio carefully cuts the lower leaves off the Sabal, discarding the dried ones, and taking only the lower third of the leaves so that the tree remains healthy. "This is very important," he explained, "if you take too many leaves, the tree gets sick, the leaves get small and they won't be good for thatch." "And, you should never use the same tree two years in a row." He then dries the leaves in the sun for about two weeks before they are ready to go on the roof. His house has split palm walls, and the roof thatch is tied to palm trunk strips, or strips of bamboo. The window frames and doors are made of lumber. And as is typical with the socially-oriented Dominicans, roofs are put up during a "roofing party" which involves lots of dancing the *bachata*, drinking (sometimes copious quantities of) home-made beer or Presidente and, of course, putting up palm thatch. When complete, the roof is blessed, and a family stays nice and dry for decades.

**Fishing with Palm Bows, Eastern Pantanal, Brazil:** Poised like a statue over dark, still water, Santiago scans for giant pacu fish navigating just below the surface. With a fluid, continuous motion as graceful as any



Elpidio (second from left) and family, Guzmancitos, Dominican Republic. That's a palm thatch roof. Bob Blenker is at right.

dancer, Santiago draws his bow and looses a six foot arrow with a deadly black tip. His aim is true and we have fish for dinner. Santiago, a Paiaguás Indian, derives most of his living from the forest. He hunts game, fishes and harvests the bounty of the jungle's flora. "Every plant has a purpose," he explains in broken Portuguese, mixed with a form of Guaraní. "I use the *liana* to climb the açai palm (*Euterpe oleracea*), which give me berries," he continues, "and my bow and arrow come from the palm. And the string comes from another (*Astrocaryum aculeatum*). The palm provides an extremely hard and springy wood which is bound together in strips for the bow, and is carved into long, sharp points as arrowheads. He teaches me to give the *castanho* tree (Brazil nut) a very wide berth. "The seed pod (which weighs about five pounds and falls from the crown 150 to 200 feet above the forest floor) will kill you," he says, "look at the animal trails. They go around the tree at a safe distance." Even the animals know this lesson. On our way back to the village aboard our dugout canoe, to meet the Salesian monk of the Don

(Continued on page 21)



## Close Encounters with Palms

(Continued from page 20)

Bosco mission who teaches them Portuguese, he stops to shimmy up an açaí. The forest floor is flooded this time of year. Santiago shimmies up the palm by wrapping a vine around his ankles. Using the tension of the vine, he wedges his feet against the trunk on either side, climbing as easily as if he were using a ladder. As he climbs, he dislodges some of açaí fruit, which falls with a plop into the water below. The hard fruit is quickly gobbled up by the pacu fish which now school around the base of the tree. Using their strong jaws and sharp teeth, this big brother of the piranha easily cracks the hard seeds. "The forest...the palms....they give us everything. They give us life," he says.

**Swamp Cabbage, Florida, USA:** Swamp cabbage, *palmito*, heart of palm: it has many names. However, no "Florida Cracker" feast is complete without it. It is branding and tagging day at the Dakin Dairy near Myakka City. And typical of rural people the world over, the philosophy of "many hands makes for light work" holds true. It seems as though the entire county has arrived in pickups, on four wheelers and even a horse or two. And, as is also typical with people who work the land around the world, food is an important part of the day. Alligator, wild hog and some barbeque beef is on the menu, along with cheese grits and corn bread and beans. But, the most important part of the feast is the swamp cabbage. I head off with my nephews and some of the Dakin boys, chain saw in hand, to harvest the crown of small palmettos (*Sabal palmetto*). The white, to light green heart of palm is tender and a bit sweet when eaten raw. But the locals prefer it sautéed in a little bit of oil,

butter or bacon grease, with onions, salt and pepper. Cooked in a large cast iron pot over an open fire, the swamp cabbage is spooned like hot sauerkraut on to plates to the happy sounds of the waiting crowd.

**Eating Gru-gru with the kids at Jessamine Eden, Grenada, West Indies:** "They germinate better after passing through a cow," explains Dr. Valma Jessamy, "and the cows love to eat them – the kids need to be fast to get a good fruit before the cows gobble them up." We learn about the dangerously-spiny *Acrocomia aculeata*, while sucking on its bright yellow fruit at Jessamine Eden Botanical Garden about 45 minutes northwest of St. Georges, Grenada. Before chewing gum, and before fast food, young Grenadians would suck on the fruit to entertain their mouths, slake their thirst and hold off hunger through the cricket match. Neither particularly sweet, nor particularly tart, the gru-gru is an acquired taste. So, how do you chop down a gru-gru when you don't want it anymore? "Very, very carefully," said Dr. Jessamy as she impaled the ground with one of the long, black, needle-sharp spines. An offspring of that tree that survived the devastation of Hurricane Ivan grows in my yard – and maybe some of yours.

For those who have lived or traveled many of these observations may be familiar. The subject of many a thesis or paper, productive uses of palms are myriad. And by the way, Graminae (Grasses) and Leguminosae are the first and second most important plant families in terms of usefulness to humans.

*'Areca Palm'—Dypsis lutescens—is found almost everywhere along the coasts of Central Florida. Here, a well-grown attractive planting of the rather tender palm in Lake Placid, Highlands County.  
(Photo by Walt Darnall)*



*Recognize anyone on the Earring Point visit , March 23rd? Left foreground is tourguide Jason Baker; right foreground is his wife, Sue Reilly. Beyond Jason's shoulder are Jerry & Mary Ann Hooper. Right back-ground, Treasurer Maryann Krisovitch has a spirited discussion with President Lucinda McCartney across Editor John.  
(Photo by Lek Wallace)*



### Editor's Postscript

**Phil Stager** and Rick Nale will handle the plant auction at the June 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. Their soft-shoe routine is nothing short of superb. Worth attending for the show.

**A reminder once again.** If you expect to sit down—during lunch, at least--while at the Darnalls' on June 8<sup>th</sup>, you had better bring a lawn chair or a box or something so that you are able to do so. I do hope we'll see some folks missing at the East Coast fiesta. **(Cindy Broome, will you be there?)**

## From the Editor's Desk

**Well, seemed** like Old Times on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, a bunch of gawkers toured Earring Point, accompanied by Anne Michael in her golf cart. At good guess, at least 60 people, likely more, visited the property. Jason Baker was in fine fettle (what's a 'fettle'?) as he explained all those beautiful old mature palms far above our heads. The count was swelled by locals curious to see what Janice Broda, East Coast VP (and Vero resident) was raving about. Folks from the Pelican Island Audubon Society, the Oslo Road Conservation Area, and the Eugenia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society—all part of Janice's smorgasbord of local activities. I think I also spotted a couple of faces from the Indian River Mosquito Control District, of which she is a commissioner. Maybe the same number for Ron's Sanctuary in Valkaria, though not all the same people.

**No coyol** at Walt Darnall's so that all of you can get home safely from Lake Placid on June 8th. (See under: "Alcoholic drinks, fermented from palms". Also see Bob Blenker's account of Happy Hour around the palm world on page 17) Now, who made palm wine that was a feature of a meeting at Faith Bishock's in yesteryear? Or—perhaps—some enterprising members have made beer from palms? If so, the Editor would love to hear from you. But maybe not, there most likely being unpaid state tax on such products? Hey, perhaps Bob is onto something. Citrus may be on the way out, the next cash crop might be spirits? And all that sugar cane is turned into something quite interesting in the Caribbean. . . . Another thought: if plant and seed sales decline, perhaps CFPACS could use an auxiliary fundraising source?

**Speaking of** comestibles, has anyone used the Jelly Palm (*Butia capitata*) actually to make jelly?

**While fried** chicken and iced tea and a salad or two will be provided for lunch at the Darnalls' through the munificence (!) of our group, it is suggested also that folks might like to bring a side dish of some kind. The specific request, from the highest level in CFPACS, is **NO DESSERTS**. I admit to having attended events where everyone brought dessert and nothing else. . . . problem as main course. Otherwise, *Schlecht* is always welcome, yes? In my family, the German word for 'bad' was used as descriptive term for sweets generally. ("You don't need any more *Schlecht*, kid!" Turned into a noun by being capitalized.) Now Cathy Darnall will be making a sheet cake, I have been told--and we do realize that it will be totally wholesome as befits the stalwart members of CFPACS.

**September 14<sup>th</sup> and December 7<sup>th</sup>** are dates to remember. In September we meet in the Myakka City area—at Faith Bishock's and at the Presley farm not far away. Lunch has not yet been revealed but there are rumors of barbeque. In December, the sociable meeting at Rob Branch and Susie Dow's, yes, in Sarasota but not in the manicured part. Mention has been made of a Cuban pig roast (tickets required?). I have been lobbying for a mariachi band, too, so far to deaf ears. But I guess not genuinely "Cuban." Maybe they're hoping I'll go away.

**Sum total:** CFPACS is alive and moving again. In the December issue of *The Palmateer*, perhaps sooner, you will be able to buy Christmas gift 2014 memberships for your friends.

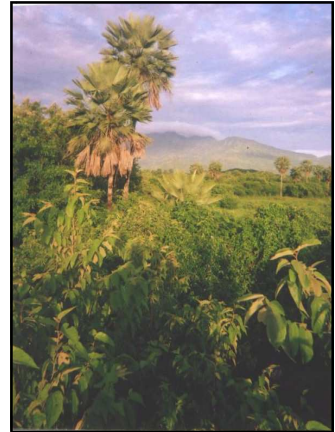
—John Kennedy



## From Bill Black's Travels in South America



Left, *Copernicia alba* west of Puerto Suarez, Bolivia. Right, *Copernicia prunifera*, Ceara state, Brazil.



Above, *Copernicia tectorum*, on the llanos of central Venezuela, north of the Orinoco River, At right, *Copernicia alba* & *Syagrus romanzoffiana* in far north Argentina.



Above, *Copernicia prunifera* on a plaza in Filadélfia, Tocantins state, Brazil. Right, *Copernicia alba*, planted 19 years ago from the pot, at home in Osceola County.



## The Ideal Palm

**Oh, for the Ideal Palm!** It would be pinnate because most folks' idea of a palm looks something like a Coconut Palm or (maybe) a Queen Palm. But, hey, the dead leaves don't fall off, require more trouble to remove as the palm gets taller.

**So, the Ideal Palm** is self-cleaning, means a crownshaft. But a crownshaft brings visions of a Royal Palm maybe towering 60 feet over a flat-roofed 1950s house, making it look even smaller and more squat. Ideal Palm is a manageable size, let's say 35-40 feet.

**Growth rate** should be steady, not too fast or too slow. After all, retirees would like to see some reputable size before heading into hospice care. Perhaps just under a foot of growth per year.

**Sun or shade?** OK, able to take either but better growth in sun. Check.

**Soil requirements.** . . umm. . . not finicky, will take sand, loam, muck, clay in stride.

**Watering?** The Ideal Palm doesn't need much water, isn't an extra premium on the water bill. Also it can take much water (maybe standing water for a bit after really heavy rain) or none for long stretches—think Foxtail here.

**Fertilization needs** would be minimal. Maybe a once-a-year shot (small amount) of palm fertilizer, but the Ideal Palm doesn't really need it. Owners, however, require busyness as an antidote to laziness, sitting around the pool, get going (a little). The arcades are closed, gotta do something.

**Transplants easily** does the Ideal Palm, whether potting up or deciding that it was planted unwisely in the wrong place, let's put it over there instead. Furthermore, this palm works well with tree spades and can be dug out of the field and transported to the



*The Ideal Palm*  
(Drawing by Elizabeth Kennedy)

gated subdivision, where it is the preferred palm at the top of the list of permitted plants.

**Diseases and pests** always trouble the homeowner, as well as the condo association. The Ideal Palm is essentially disease-resistant though, for the sake of argument, we'll grant some small susceptibility to scale, enough to have the anxious homeowner surveying the poison aisle at the Big Box stores and picking the right size sprayer. As for pests, one bite and the weevil (or whatever) goes to Bug Heaven. But no part toxic to humans—especially small humans—or to pets—Mommy's little poodle is safe.

**Salt tolerance** is a given with the Ideal Palm. That means taking salt air and salt in the soil. Yes, it can be planted on the dune line but we must warn that its appearance will be better when out of the direct wind.

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## The Ideal Palm

(Continued from page 25)

**Cold hardiness**, yes, we always get to this one, later rather than sooner, for we don't want to think about it. The Ideal Palm will take 25 degrees for 6-8 hours with nominal damage, perhaps down to 18 for brief periods with more substantial damages (we need to be reasonable here). It is completely resistant to frost damage. Thus, the palm can be planted from Jacksonville south. No need to parse the significance of "cold hardiness" when uttered by those living south of you. Us Central Floridians leery of Palm Beach County residents who talk of cold hardy, meaning two nights at 30 for an hour on each occasion.

**Flowers/Seeds/Debris:** inevitable issues with palms. The Ideal Palm is self-fertile, no nonsense about male and female individuals. And it produces (reliably) no more than 150 seeds after once-a-year flowering. These germinate within three months and grow sturdily thereafter. It would be too much to hope that fallen leaves would be nicely stacked but these would come down once a year, to be gathered up quickly and disposed of, not of a size that require two persons to carry to the disposal site.

**Since the** Ideal Palm is tailored to consumer/owner preference, its price (after initial gouging) is totally reasonable because nurserymen/growers can raise it cheaply.

**Even as** we discuss this, cell tissue laboratories around the tropical world—which includes Florida, at least in the summer—race to produce the super Ideal Palm. Are you listening, University of Florida research stations? I have the name picked out already:

***Kennedy idealissima***

—John Kennedy



*From the famed Palmz 'n' Weedz garden in Vero Beach: this Borassodendron machadonis was grown from seed obtained 20 years ago from a Famous Palmperson in an early phase of his career. The new leaf is about 7 feet high, the trunk maybe 18 inches. The palmling was planted in a semi-shady area that has grown more densely shady, which likely slowed its growth but also protected it during freezes. Immediately behind is Schippia concolor.*



*Ron Eward & Fiona Pearce with CFPACS gift of garden art on March 23rd in Val-karia. (Photo by Lek Wallace)*



## Microclimate, Anyone?



(Photos by Walt Darnall)



In 2005, Walt Darnall took a small *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana* as a gift to an old friend who had retired to East Palatka, 53 miles south of Jacksonville.

**Above, how** it's grown since then. And, the friend says the palm has never been defoliated in the winters since then.

**Maybe not** so amazing. That's the St. Johns River, about half a mile wide in the background, the house and palm on the east side. Planted, at Walt's suggestion, on the south side of the house under a high live oak canopy.

—John Kennedy



An inviting pathway into a wooded area on the Darnall property.

(Photo by Walt)

We should judge a man's worth, not by his good qualities but by the use he puts them to.

—LaRoche foucauld, Maxim 437

Hey, that's Rob Branch, Auctioneer, at Ron's Sanctuary on March 23rd. Is that *Chamaedorea stolonifera*? Jason Baker, alternate auctioneer, is in back.

(Photo by Lek Wallace)



<b>Opening Checking Balance 1/1/12</b>	\$9,235.19
Income	\$7,784.32
Expenses	\$6,587.77
<b>Ending Checking Balance 12/31/12</b>	\$10,431.74
<b>Assets</b>	
Endowment (Mutual Fund)	\$7,960.63
Certificate of Deposit	\$6,397.77
<b>Total Assets</b>	\$14,358.40
<b>Net Worth as of 12/31/12</b>	\$24,790.14
<hr/>	
<b>Opening Checking Balance 1/1/13</b>	\$10,431.74
<b>Income</b>	
Membership	\$1,033.78
Merchandise	120.00
Private Sales	820.32
Public Sales	2,702.89
Seed Bank	343.89
<b>Total Income</b>	\$5,020.88
<b>Expenses</b>	
Meeting Expense	\$225.56
Office Supplies	85.32
Public Relations	375.75
Seed Bank	112.15
Taxes	256.40
Vendor Fees	379.56
Vendor Proceeds	2,415.14
Website	495.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$4,344.88
<b>Ending Checking Balance (5/10/13)</b>	\$11,107.74

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Maryann Krisovitch (treasurer@cfpacs.org)

Maryann became treasurer on January 1, 2013. At the top of the column at left is a summary of finances in 2012, Just below are the details of finances to May 2013.



*A peek at a small area of the Lake Placid meeting site.  
(Photo by Walt Darnall)*

### Assets

Endowment Fund Balance  
\$9,738.68  
Certificates of Deposit  
\$6,397.77

### Total Assets

\$16,136.45

### Net Worth as of 5/10/13

\$27,244.19

## Recycling Gray Water Onto Home Gardens

(from the June 2003 issue of *The Palmateer*)

*More than 14 million people live in Florida and many more residents can be expected in the years ahead. Available water, now mostly used to irrigate lawns, will probably be tightly restricted in the years ahead; drought can also be expected. How, then, can our gardens—our collections—be preserved under such conditions? The use of gray water, or recycled water, may become a serious possibility. At present, there is very little available information on its home use. Golf courses routinely use such water but the smaller-scale landscape does not appear to be a potential focus at the present in Florida. What's below is taken from the University of Massachusetts Extension Service website. Gardeners in the Northeast have endured severe drought conditions for several years, which have ended only in the past severe winter which dropped 284 inches of snow in suburban Boston. Anyone who can supply further information about home use of gray water should contact me.—Editor*

Sometimes plants in a vegetable garden or flowerbed will need more water than is provided through normal rainfall. Usually at those times a gardener just turns on an outside faucet and waters the garden, drawing on community water supplies, or from a private well.

But-below normal rainfall and predictions that the Northeast may be going through a drought cycle are causing people to find other ways to provide gardens with the

moisture they need without using what may become scarce supplies of fresh water.

One method is to use the wastewater, usually referred to as gray water, produced in the home. The following are answers to some basic questions about how to safely use gray water in the home garden.

### **First, what is gray water?**

Gray water is all the non-toilet wastewater produced in the average household including the water from bathtubs, showers, sinks, washing machines, and dishwashers. Although gray water does not need extensive chemical or biological treatment before it can be used in the garden as irrigation water, it still must be used carefully because it usually contains grease, hair, detergent, cosmetics, dead skin, food particles and small amounts of fecal matter.

### **How much gray water can be used in the home garden?**

First, collect only as much wastewater as you will need to meet the water requirements of your garden. The rest should go into your sewer or septic system.

A good rule-of-thumb for deciding how much gray water to use on your garden is that a square foot of well-drained, loamy soil can handle about a half gallon of gray water per week. In other words, if your garden area is 500 square feet, then you can put up to 250 gallons of gray water on your garden each week.

If you can be choosy about the gray water you recycle on your garden, then use shower

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and bathtub water first, followed in decreasing order of desirability by water from the bathroom sink, utility sink, washing machine, kitchen sink and dishwasher. Water from the kitchen sink and dishwasher is not desirable because of the larger proportion of grease, food particles and other materials it will contain. If there is no way you can avoid using water from the kitchen sink and dishwasher, try to limit the amount of grease and solid food particles that go down the drain. Do not recycle water from a washing machine that has been used to wash baby diapers because it may contain fecal matter.

### **What about soaps and detergents? Are they harmful to the soil and plants?**

Soaps and detergents are biodegradable, but they can present problems when gray water is used over an extended period. The main problem with most cleaning agents is that they contain sodium salts which, if present in excessive amounts, can damage the soil structure, can create an alkaline condition, and can also damage plants.

Avoid detergents that advertise "softening power," because they will have a large proportion of sodium-based compounds. The phosphates in detergents can be good for plant growth, but unfortunately, the detergents highest in phosphates usually contain the greatest amount of sodium. If you re-use washing machine water, cut down or eliminate the amount of bleach you use and do not use detergents or additives that contain boron, which is especially toxic to plants. When doing your household cleaning, use ammonia, or products that contain ammonia, instead of chlorine as the cleaning agent.

### **What precautions can I take to protect the soil from damage when I use gray water over a long period of time?**

As mentioned earlier, a great danger in using gray water is the build-up of sodium in the soil. You can discover if the sodium levels are high by having the pH of your soil tested. A pH of 7.5 or above indicates that your soil has become loaded with sodium. You can correct or avoid this problem by spreading gypsum (calcium sulfate) over the soil at a rate of two pounds per 100 square feet about once a month. Rainfall, or rotating gray water applications with fresh water, will help leach the soil of sodium and excess salts.

### **Is there any danger of spreading disease by using gray water in the garden?**

Recycled water from the bath, shower, or washing machine could contain organisms causing diseases in humans. However, when gray water is poured onto soil that has an abundance of organic matter, the potentially harmful bacteria and viruses die quickly. If any should survive, it is unlikely that they would be taken up by the roots of garden plants and transferred to the edible portion of food plants. Nevertheless, for safety, you could use gray water to irrigate lawns and ornamental plants only.

### **How should I apply gray water to the soil?**

Whether you carry your gray water to the garden by hand in buckets or modify your household plumbing for direct delivery of water to the area where it is needed, a number of guidelines should be followed in applying the water. They include:  
If possible, use gray water for your ornamental plants and shrubs and use what fresh water is available for your vegetable garden. If

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you need to use gray water for irrigating food plants, restrict its application to the soil around plants such as corn, tomatoes, broccoli, or other vegetables of which only the above ground part is eaten. Do not apply gray water to leafy vegetables or root crops. Apply the gray water directly to the soil surface. Do not use an overhead sprinkler, or allow the recycled water to splash off the soil and contact the above-ground portion of the plants. If you have a drip irrigation system, do not use gray water in it since any solid matter it might contain could clog the emitters in the pipe.

Pour the gray water on flat garden areas; avoid steep slopes where runoff could be a problem.

Apply the wastewater over a broad area; avoid concentrating it on one particular site. When possible, rotate applications of gray water with fresh water. The fresh water will help leach out any soil contaminants that might be building up.

Apply thick compost mulches to areas where you use gray water. They will speed the natural decomposition of waste residues. Use gray water on well-established plants only. Seedlings can not withstand the impurities of the waste water.

Do not use gray water, which is alkaline, on acid-loving plants such as rhododendrons and azaleas. Be sure to rotate your use of gray water with fresh water on lawns and fruit trees.

### How can I get gray water from the house to the garden?

Gray water can be transported to the garden in a number of ways, the most basic being to bucket the water from the sinks and bathtub into pails and hand carry it to the garden.

More sophisticated systems involve siphoning or pumping water from the bathtub or other deep basins (sumps) to the yard through a garden hose, or removing the trap from the bathroom sink drain pipe and putting a five-gallon, or larger, bucket beneath the sink. If you decide to adapt your plumbing system to allow you to get the gray water to the garden, be sure to have your local board of health inspect your work to insure that no sanitary codes are violated.

**Prepared by: Allen V. Barker, Professor; Jean E. English, Graduate Student, Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.**

Additional information specific to the Landscape, Nursery and Urban Forestry industry can be found at the UMass Extension UMass-GreenInfo.org web site.

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### Comment (June 2003):

*Nobody contacted the Editor after this article was published 10 years ago. There was almost no information available on the subject aside from a few ordinances in a couple of towns in California. It was, in fact, against the law in many places—though golf courses were often connected with gray water.*

*Florida's population is now 17 million but the available water has not increased, too. And weather seems increasingly unpredictable, with several years of below-average rainy season rainfall.*

*The Editor intends to research technical and legal developments about gray water since the time this article appeared. Any member with particular knowledge of the topic should contact me.*

—John Kennedy

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





Above, Anne Michael at Earring Point on March 23rd. East vp Janice Broda is at right. (Photo by Dave Reid)



A trio of *Elaeis guineensis* planted at Earring Point by CFPACS volunteers in 2006. Below, a corner of Ron's Sanctuary, Valkaria, overlooking Goat Creek. (Photos by Lek Wallace)



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