

The Palmateer

Volume 39, Number 2 Central Florida Palm & Cycad Society

June 2017

June 17th CFPACS Visit to Leu Gardens, Orlando



Left, a vista at Leu Gardens.

(Photo by Janice Broda)

Right, on the tour, Eric Schmidt, center.

(Photo by Maryann Krisovitch)



“**What is** so rare as a day in June?” asks the poet. The answer, of course, is a June day at Leu. Saturday, June 17th, 60 CFPACS members and friends visited the Orlando botanical garden. Despite the 90-degree temperature, no one was spotted leaving early.

At 10:00 a.m. (maybe a few minutes later), we began in Leu House with a presentation by Eric Schmidt (his title is “Botanical Records Specialist”). Eric talked for about 45 minutes on successes with palms at Leu. His slide show featured pictures of a particular species when planted,

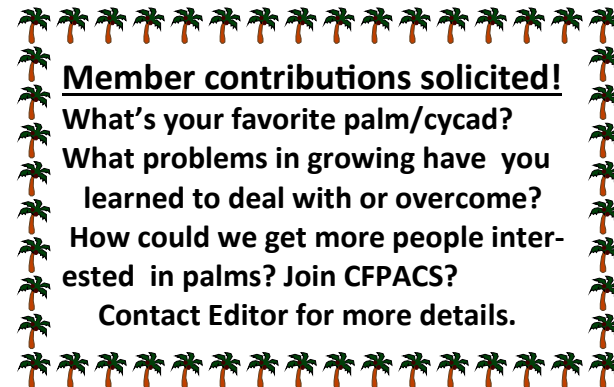
next to pictures of the much bigger palm taken recently. The attentive audience had questions and comments. **Then it** was time for the tour, as Eric led us around to visit every (?) palm at Leu. Maybe not every one, but all those (many) he regards as treasures. The visitors did

not question his valuations though they did ask about growth and culture. **After two** hours or so, it was time for lunch. Back to the Leu House patio, in the shade, to eat lunches that everyone had brought. The chapter provided cold bottled

(Continued on page 3)



CONTENTS	
Leu meeting	1
Syagrus revision	3
My favorite cycad	5
Nikau palms in New Zealand	6
More Nikau palms	8
Mystery palms	9
Native companion plants	12
President's Message	15
An Apopka garden	16
From the Editor's Desk	17
Damage from Hurricane Matthew	18
Membership information	20
Board List	21



Member contributions solicited!

 What's your favorite palm/cycad?

 What problems in growing have you

 learned to deal with or overcome?

 How could we get more people inter-

 ested in palms? Join CFPACS?

 Contact Editor for more details.

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 re-printed 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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Leu Visit

(Continued from page 1)

water, much appreciated. And, with lunch time, now coming up for 2 p.m., a few of us slipped into Leu House for a little interlude in the air conditioning.

The auction and sale began at 2:30. To the surprise of some, there were more plants for auction than for vendor sale. Quite a few beautiful cycads were auctioned off. The June meeting closed a little after 3. Per

usual, cars/SUV's drove off with visible waving fronds apparent in the windows. **Eric was** a genial, kind, and knowledgeable host. We thank him and Leu Gardens for a truly wonderful day!



*Above, palm presentation by Eric Schmidt.
(Photo by Maryann Krisovitch)*
*Left, a Caryota gigas leaf at Leu.
(Photo by Janice Broda)*

**"A revision of the genus *Syagrus*" by Larry Noblick, 2017.
<https://biotaxa.org/Phytotaxa/article/view/phytotaxa.294.1.1>
The full document may be accessed in a pdf (262 pp.).**

A Palm Seldom Seen in Central Florida . . . but seen at Leu



Reinhardtia latisecta, above. (Photo by Janice Broda)
Right, a bigger individual of the same species, with red inflorescence. (Photo by Eric Schmidt)



#218

Hypocrisy is the homage that vice
pays to virtue.

— *The Maxims of La Rochefoucauld*



My Favorite Cycad: *Ceratozamia robusta*

By Jerry Luedeke

A few years ago I had the great fortune to join Dave Hall and Mike Ricigliano on a trip to Homestead to buy palms. We went to a popular nursery there that had palms and cycads. I came across a *Ceratozamia mexicana* that I just had to have. **Over the** course of about two and a half years I'd had pollen cones emerge but no flushes. Well, this is the year it finally flushed and to my great surprise it was bronze emergent which was not a trait of a *C. mexicana*. After much debate and research we discovered that to my great fortune and mislabeling I have a *Ceratozamia robusta* which I am even more pleased with than I would have been with the *mexicana*.



Nikau Palms in New Zealand

Rhopalostylis sapida in habitat

Photos by Malcolm Thomas

Floridians who happen to be palm-lovers pride themselves on all the palms they are able to grow here. Maybe a particular species may not survive in chillier North Florida (Jacksonville/Gainesville) but maybe it will be more at home in Central Florida (the Orlando area or nearby coastal Brevard County). If this is still too chilly, then farther south perhaps, to Tampa Bay, Palm Beach County, or Miami.

Somewhere or other in Florida, most palms can be grown, with the possible exception of those from Mediterranean climate habitats, essentially dry, cooler in winter, less humid places.



(Maybe Florida isn't as humid in summer as the Amazon, but we're unsure about that.) **However, the** Nikau palm--native to New Zealand--has not been successfully grown here.

Here are some pictures of

that remarkably attractive species in habitat, sent by John Prince, former editor of the Palm & Cycad Society of New Zealand's magazine.

—John Kennedy



The locale is Whangara District, north of Gisborne, in the region known as just "the East Coast" by Kiwis. NZ has eastern coasts all the way from the top to the bottom. But the capitalized term re-

(Continued on page 7)

Nikau Palms in NZ

(Continued from page 6)

fers only to one part of the eastern coast of the North Island.

No part of NZ is as warm as Florida where you palm growers live. At best the climate is Warm Temperate, especially around the coastal regions of the upper half of the North Island. A lot of it would get mild winter frosts from time to time. Summer max temps of 28-30C [82-86F]at times.

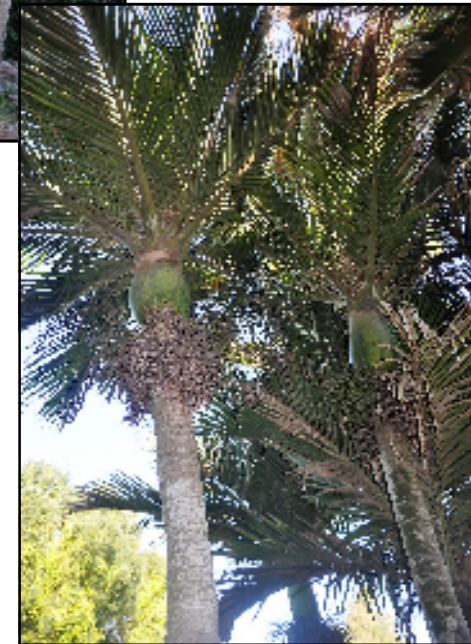
Nikau habitats went coastally far south of there, to about halfway down each coast of the South Island.

The southernmost palm in nature is the form of Nikau on the southern part of the offshore cluster known as the Chatham Islands (over 44 degrees south). Nothing beyond that in terms of land till you get to Antarctica. NZ has a

maritime or oceanic climate...not a continental one like most of the USA has. **Gisborne** is hot and dry in summer, and the surrounding lands as you go North up the coast from there are definitely drier looking than where I live [in the subtropical northern part of the North Island]. Most of the native flora has gone from the Gisborne area...now mostly farming and forestry. It is rather remote by NZ standards, still with a marked Maori presence. **Some years** back and a good art house/film was set in this area, called 'Whale Rider', on the coast of the Whangara district, adapted from a novel by a leading Maori novelist. The palms in the photos are, at a guess, 50 or 60 years old.



Malcolm Thomas, a former police officer, retired to this rural area where the Nikau pictures were taken.



Nikau are slow, and are adapted to a warm temperate/temperate climate without severe frosts or snow.

— John Prince

More Nikau

John Prince traveled to the Whangara District about 8 years and took these pictures in approximately the same area as those photographed earlier this month by Malcolm Thomas.

Note the fence in the top picture. The Nikau are growing on private property, likely grazing land.

In the bottom picture the focus is on the palms' inflores-

cences and infructescences.

It should be remembered that in *New Zealand*, traveling south means to colder places. Traveling north means to warmer places.

Eric Schmidt at Leu has planted another very small Nikau (the term used in NZ covers both species in the genus), *Rhopalostylis baueri*, ssp. *cheesmanii*. This species is from the Kermadec Islands, thus warmer than the climate where *R. sapida* flourishes.



Left, another Nikau palm, Rhopalostylis baueri, ssp. cheesmanii—not in New Zealand but planted at Leu.

(Photo by Janice)



By John Kennedy

Yes, there is a list of palms planted in the ground that I've kept since I started with palms about 1980 or so. I was pretty casual with it, picked up a palm here or there, didn't have all that many for some years.

How could I know that my half acre would be the most densely planted within six blocks here in Vero Beach? And, maybe, an affront to all the neighbors with their flawless, perfect, empty lawns.

Too many entries on the list run like this one:

"Actinorhytis calapparia*** (obit 1-01)." No indication where I got it—or when--only that it died in winter 16 years ago. The asterisks mean that it was bigger than a seedling but hadn't yet bloomed.

The list indicates that I have two *Copernicia alba*. I can spot one, hard to miss, with a short trunk and 15 leaves on

Mystery Palms



"Syagrus macroglossa"—see how far the leaf extends on the right, past the trunk of my probable Sabal domingensis.

long petioles. But where is the other?

Some entries have the month the palm was planted, but many do not. And, of course, totally missing is the date when I bought each

little palm, many not much more than a seedling, probably several years earlier.

How long did it live, unharmed, in the pot until I planted it (too small?) where the vicious wedelia could

wipe it out, if freezes didn't do the job in yesteryear?

Computers helped record-keeping (for the conscientious) when these became ordinary household items in the early to mid-1990s. No longer fumbling for a paper list that you wrote down (it has to be here, somewhere). **I could** plead—before retirement—that I was usually teaching an overload, reading a million words a year of 'superb' student essays (the fate of lowly community-college English teachers unable to focus, like university profs, only on—say-- 18th-century poetry).

I brought home from somewhere a small "Syagrus macroglossa." When I recently went looking for details online about it, there doesn't appear to be any such species. If "macroglossa" means "long leaf," this makes sense,

(Continued on page 10)

Mystery Palms

(Continued from page 9)

and it is clearly a *Syagrus*. I can't have invented the name. **Could someone** have sold it as this before Larry Noblick really got going in his revision of the genus? The name maybe an innocent mistake? After all, I seem to have a green *Bismarckia* although I know that I never bought anything labeled as such. My palm list doesn't offer any help here.

My "macroglossa" is, after at least 15 years, shorter and more slow-growing than a regular Queen Palm. The leaves are 12 feet long, with leaflets in clusters of 2 or 3 on either side of the rachis. Rather plumey-looking, with very long leaf bases. The palm is about 15 feet high overall.

The fruit is tiny (2 cm or 0.75 inch long), and it's **brown**.



A 20-foot single-trunk Ptychosperma, gift of a Puerto Rican property owner. Could it be P. microcarpum?

Not yellow or green. Looks like a skinny, elongated acorn.

Charlie Beck, the Palm Beach editor, steered me to Noblick's recent complete revision of *Syagrus*, available online. Only 262 pages in pdf. Two hours later, almost blind and nearly brain-dead, I

have found two species with brown fruit but only one fits for size and single trunk.

Can I really have *Syagrus glaucescens*? Then I notice, amid the mass of material, a list of at least a dozen hybrids in the genus for which no details are provided. I wonder, helplessly, whether Noblick

was still sane when he finished his revision with all the citations of where these palms had been mentioned previously under whatever name that occurred to earlier botanists?

If there are any other mysteries out back, I'll look elsewhere, clear my addled brain. OK, how about a suddenly tall (20-foot), thin, single-trunk palm I was given by a Puerto Rican property owner from those growing in the atrium in his estancia in Brevard County. I'm almost sure it was *Ptychosperma microcarpum*, but there's no such species on my palm list. The palm was maybe 4 feet high until a couple of years ago. **OK, there's** another *Ptychosperma*, not quite 20 feet high, a single, with a trunk maybe 3 inches thick. I have a dim memory of its being called *Ptychosperma*

(Continued on page 11)

Mystery Palms

(Continued from page 10)

waitianum. Since I knew Lucita Wait back when I first got involved with palms, and visited her in Miami, this is a species I would like to have. **But didn't** someone say that the species named for her has blue-green leaves? This one has just regular green leaves. And, no, not a pink/red new leaf. To make matters more interesting, it's about to bloom.

Then, there are two *Ptychosperma* clumpers, about 3-4 feet high, probably planted about 7 years ago. The two are different species. One has praemorse leaves (look like a wide open jaw), the other not. And no distinctive new leaves. There is an entry on the palm list for *Ptychosperma cuneatum*. Could one of them be that species? Which one?

I read somewhere that *Ptychosperma* hybridize promiscuously. Just what I need to know. And, if I'm getting myself fussed, I must remember that in the 1980s, no *Ptychosperma* grew outdoors in Indian River County. **Four freezes** a winter was commonplace, culminating in the great Christmas freeze of 1989, when it was 18 in my yard. Now, since prominent persons and palm trees accept the 'Chinese hoax' of global warming, *Ptychosperma* flourish here. **Also Veitchia**—but I know the ID is accurate of my big Montgomery Palm. The *V. spiralis* and *V. filifera* are clearly correct, the latter a gift from Ray Hernández, former CFPACS president and current IPS president.

My big, beautiful West Indian *Sabal* was clearly a seedling from a palm originating long ago in that well-known



Florida tourist attraction, McKee Jungle Garden here in Vero Beach. It has a trunk thicker than that of our State Tree but not as massive as *S. causiarum*. Probably *S. domingensis*, right?

Umm. Maybe it's time to go for a walk or read a Stephen King novel or check in on the president's latest tweet. . .

Left, the 3-inch trunk of maybe, perhaps, not *Ptychosperma waitianum*.



Above & below, two unknown small *Ptychosperma*.



Native Companion Plants for Palms



Looking UP at the Michael place, this is the view.

By Janice Broda
Anne and Joe Michael's yard, where we visited in March, is always inspirational. Magnificent palms are show-cased along with a nice array of native plants and well-behaved exotic ornamentals. **Many of** the exotic ornamentals were overwhelmed by

the tidal inundation wrought by Hurricane Matthew, which struck Florida on October 6/7. The confluence of the King Tide with hurricane force winds inundated the west side of Orchid Island, the barrier island from which the Michael homestead is accessed.



Looking DOWN is less obvious, but note the Spider Lily planting in the foreground.

According to Anne, many of their exotic plants succumbed, and their native plants better withstood the difficult conditions. The mangroves, uniquely adapted, to routine tidal inundation flourished, and the black mangrove (*Avicennia germinans*) was especially comely.

My favorite ground cover, undoubtedly, was Shadow, the cat who graced Anne's lap for much our tour. **My second** favorite was her bed of native spider lilies (*Hymenocallis latifolia*), which contrasted nicely with the adjacent palms, though

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

the lilies did show some signs of their recent travail.

Their linear leaves (hence the species name *latifolia*) grow to be 2 to 3 feet long, and are reminiscent of amaryllis. Like amaryllis, spider lily grows from a bulb and can be divided.

Also known as mangrove spider lily, it grows on the edge of mangrove swamps and on the front of beach dunes, so it is well-adapted to inundation by brackish or salt water and to droughty conditions.

Its white, fragrant flowers are quite stunning with a beautiful central membrane (hymen), alluded to by the genus name, *Hymenocallis*. Perfumed spider lily is yet another common name for this plant which flowers from spring through fall and can be an excellent complement to a palm planting.



The pictures of spider lily in flower were taken at the Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory, Vero Beach, since the spider lilies at the Michael Homestead were not flowering when we visited.

[Janice Broda, CFPACS East vp, is a past president of the Florida Native Plant Society.]

Right, Black Mangrove (*Avicennia germinans*) at the Michael place on the Indian River.



More Palms at Leu



Above, Sabonaria magnifica.
(Photo by Maryann Krisovitch)



Burretiokentia vieillardii,
above.
(Photo by Janice Broda)



Left, Dypsis havimentsina.
(Photo by Janice Broda)

Right, Ptychococcus lepidotus.
(Photo by Maryann Krisovich)



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What an amazing turn out for our June meeting at Leu Gardens. Many thanks to Eric Schmidt for a most informative talk. His research on unusual palm species for successful planting in our Central Florida Region will add to our gardens. We always learn so much from time in his presence.

Eric shares on such a level that novice and more experienced growers appreciate and take away something new.

After such an extremely dry spring, we experienced good fortune with a return to typical summer afternoon showers for the month of June. Here's hoping that the pattern continues throughout the summer months.

Plans for our next meeting are underway. Under consideration are a trip involving Sunken Gardens, the USF collection or both. We will solidify at our board meeting in August. Stay tuned for more information.

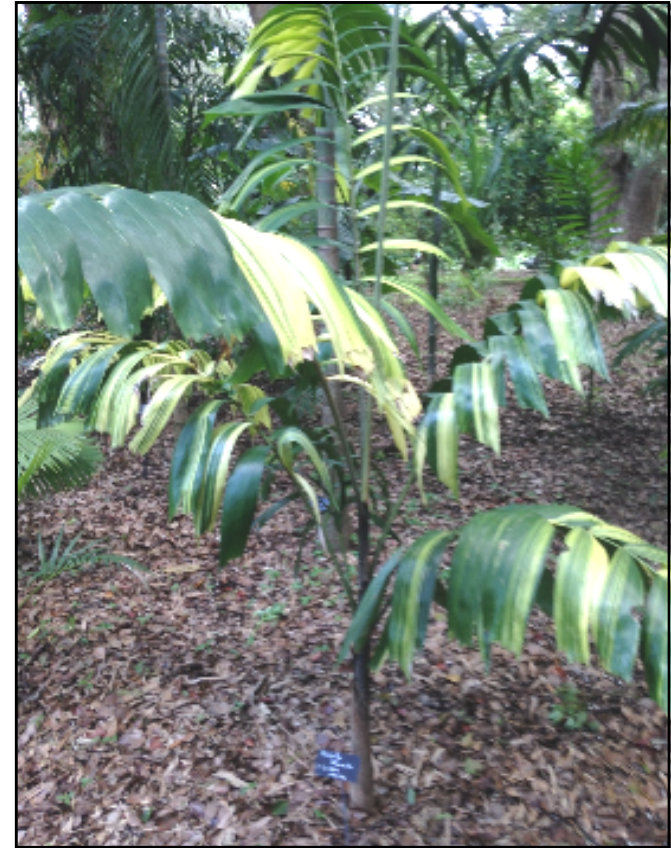
Looking forward to seeing all of you in the Fall,

Dave Hall

#271

Youth is a perpetual intoxication, a fever of the brain.

—*The Maxims of LaRochefoucauld*



Wodyetia-Veitchia arecina cross at Leu.
(Photo by Maryann Krisovitch)

What's [not] in an Apopka Garden?

By **Maryann Krisovitch**
Membership Chair

With another mild winter behind us and the heat of summer upon us, let's take a look back at a colder winter. The palms in our Apopka garden are only as old as 2007 but they have seen a lot of ups and downs.

There was the winter when I forgot to turn off the irrigation system after moistening the ground before a cold snap. That resulted in a lovely ice formation in the front yard and the death of several palms, cycads and bromeliads.

Then there was 2009 and 2010 when it seemed the blankets took up permanent residence in our yard. I became very skilled at covering some of the taller, more cold-sensitive plants with sheets

and clothes pins. I slowly shimmy the sheet up one side of the palm while standing and clipping on the other. It gives the plant something of a Dr. Seuss look, but does the job!

We have also taken to using our half-lit Christmas lights: either laying them around the base of a small cycad or palm or draping them over the taller ones. Probably for this reason alone, I have not switched to using LED lights for the holidays! Fortunately, since 2010, we have only had to cover our plants one other time and that was in 2015.

I am including the 2015 photos along with 2017 updates. Call it global warming, climate change or just a freak season, plants don't make stuff up, their growth habits show it's warmer!



*Above, front yard covered in winter 2015.
Below, front yard uncovered in winter 2017.*



From the Editor's Desk

Our Leu visit was wonderful. Folks paid such close attention to Eric Schmidt as our guide that they barely seemed to notice that it was 90°. (Occasional gulps from the carried water bottle kept them going.) As for me, with my limited attention span, I'm full up after an hour and a half, can absorb no more. I realized this some years back after an extensive time in the big Museum of Art in Philadelphia. I couldn't look at anything more. The only cure is to return more frequently for smaller amounts of time. So, my only remedy for Leu—for me to enjoy it fully—is to come back again and again.

Like the kid that I am, I also was unable to follow Eric very closely. After a while, I straggle after because what I

do naturally is poking around on my own. The downside is that I miss explanations that more attentive kids get who listen to the teacher.

* * * *

Maybe I was distracted but I haven't picked up on what is the Latest Palm discovery, now lusted after by all the folks who must have whatever is newest. I'm guessing that it grows in a small, remote valley in Colombia, not previously visited by botanists and—at this point—maybe 25 seeds are available, going by sealed bid to the highest bidder. But, then, there's another potential problem. What does Our President feel about immigrant seeds? Could be difficulties in bringing new seed into the U. S. lest it displace honest American seed.

With all of us looking so hard at palms last Saturday, did anyone notice how much else there is at Leu? In the past, I've been to Leu at least twice in February to see the huge and beautiful camellia collection in full bloom. I had never seen camellias in the ground until I came to Gainesville as a grad student many years back. A real revelation. Camellias aren't usually in gardens in Vero Beach, though I have two camellias that have managed to thrive here. (I'll reveal the secret to inquirers.)

* * * *

How wonderful to see young people with us at Leu! So, CFPACS isn't just composed of old timers and those closing in on that designation. Next time, maybe everyone will have name tags and I'll even get to know who they are. They should be encour-



That's a Lipstick Palm (Cyrtostachys renda) at Leu. The well-groomed figure that gives scale is familiar to all. (Photo by Janice Broda)

aged and offered ways to get involved.

John Kennedy

Damage & Recovery from Hurricane Matthew: New Smyrna Beach

By Dave Hall

Last fall in early October, Hurricane Mathew wreaked havoc in coastal areas of Central Florida. At my property in New Smyrna Beach wind gusts topped over 110 mph which did substantial damage to the vegetation including many palms. Some of my palms like *Syagrus botryophora* were completely lost, which I could understand. They are known not to be wind resistant.

Others were a complete surprise, like *Veitchia arecina*, cut in half. This species should be a little more wind resistant coming from Fiji, a Pacific typhoon prone area. The winds also caused some of my palms to lay down to a 45-degree angle. As seen in the pictures, my huge Royal and a tall *Caryota* species

succumbed to this fate. Other palms were almost defoliated or had all their fronds broken like these *Phoenix canariensis* and *Livistona mariae*.

One of my biggest worries during the hurricane was how my two tallest *Bismarckia* would fare. During Hurricane Wilma that hit south Florida a few years ago a lot of these were destroyed by the wind snapping off their crowns. Fortunately mine fared well with only a third of their fronds broken.

One palm species that did particularly well was the tall *Livistona chinensis*. They were not harmed in the least. In contrast, some of the *Sabal palmetto* look like they have been through a washing machine. They came out all tangled and mashed.



Battered palms in New Smyrna Beach after Hurricane Matthew last October.



All was not lost, however and recovery is still in progress.



**More Battered
Palms in New
Smyrna Beach**



Hurricane Matthew Effects in Vero Beach



A 40-ft *Archontophoenix myolensis* with several downed leaves.



A 20-ft *Wallichia disticha* had three flattened 12-ft leaves, a smaller individual had 1.

At Castle Kennedy, the editorial home base, Hurricane Matthew was not so dire as farther north, grazing Vero Beach with minimal hurricane-force winds. Some unlucky folks experienced higher gusts. As noted in the March newsletter, a big *Arenga pinnata* was uprooted. When it went down, it snapped a medium-size *Caryota mitis* (ssp. Ruth Sallenbach) that had originated, much smaller, in her garden in Palm Beach County.

Otherwise, damage was minimal. No other palms were affected beyond some having upright leaves dropped against the trunks: *Bismarckias*, an *Archontophoenix myolensis*. The leaves were not broken or snapped.

—John Kennedy



Never Say Die! Downed Palm Keeps Trying

The top picture shows the 40-ft *Arenga pinnata* that went down in Vero during Hurricane Matthew last October. The family cut off the leaves but the palm extended well over the ditch.

Despite having its root ball in the air, the palm put out an inflorescence. But this never opened and a month or so later withered.

The bottom picture (Itaken last week) shows a new inflorescence put out by the dying (?) palm. In December, the county cut off the trunk over the ditch and took this away. **It should** be noted that some battered leaves lower on the trunk are still green—though the palm is a goner.

—John Kennedy



(Photo by Matthew Kennedy)

PayPal Tutorial

Here is how to make a payment to CFPACS using PayPal

1) Log on to <http://www.paypal.com>

2) If you have a PayPal account, log into your account. If you do not have a PayPal account, click on the 'Personal' tab. Once on the 'Personal' page go to 'Send Money' and then 'Send Money Online.'

3) Once on the 'Send Money' page, type 'payments@cfpacs.com' in the 'To' field.

Type in your email address in the 'From' field and the amount you wish to pay in the 'Amount' field.

4) From there you will be taken to a secure page where you can enter your name, address and credit card information.

5) When you are ready to finish up the payment process, please indicate whether your payment is for membership or seeds or t-shirts in the message field.

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Membership also available at website:

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Those joining before October 1 have access to all four issues of *The Palmateer* for the current year.



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Eric Schmidt emphasizes a point about a palm during the tour at Leu.

(Photo by Janice Broda)