

The Palmateer

Volume 12, Number 3

Central Florida Palm & Cycad Society

October 2020

Three Days in Miami

Day One

Miami Bound

By Libby Luedeke

Road Trip! October 2nd found us hitting the road for an extended weekend in South Florida. Our first day had us visiting several nurseries allowing us to expand our gardens. Our first stop was at Searle Brothers who had a public sale that very weekend, lucky us. They specialize in rare and unusual palms and other common ground cover. Along with the state's largest collection of crotons, great companion of our palms. Many of our members collected palms, bromeliads and

crotons. Most everything was priced to sell, but I almost lost it over a hybrid Lipstick Palm priced at \$2200.00. I made sure I gave that one a wide berth.

From there we stopped at Richard Lyons Nursery. They specialize in ground cover and unique conifers. Very well laid out and extensive gardens with many mature trees and cycads beckoned us to explore and enjoy ourselves. You'll see a picture of an Old Man Palm that captured my attention. Plus, the grounds were littered with many tropical



Left, Dave Hall and Rick Ryals discuss the sale at Searle Brothers Nursery.

Below, an Anyeitum Palm, Carpoxyton macrospermum at Richard Lyons Nursery.

plants I have never seen before, along with gingers in full bloom and large bromeliads. I found a *Stapelia* that's been on my wish list for a while.

Next was Action Theory. Many shade houses boasted large varieties of palms, cycads, crotons and bromeliads. But alas, stormy skies cut us a little short. Jerry and I tried to make it to Redlands Nursery, but the weather was not cooperative. So we decided that was enough for one day. Time to ready ourselves for DayTwo.





*Mature Old Man
Palm at Richard
Lyons Nursery.*

*(Photo by Libby
Luedeke)*

CONTENTS

Day One in Miami	1
Day Two in Miami	3
Day Three in Miami	5
The Freeze of 1835	7
Three-headed Phoenix	9
More Pictures at Mike Cooper's	10
President's Message	11
Hybrid Borassus	13
From the Editor's Desk	13
Membership Information	15
CFPACS Board list	16

The Palmateer

The Palmateer is published four times a year: March, June, September/October, and December by Central Florida Palm & Cycad Society, a chapter of the International Palm Society and of The Cycad Society.

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

The Palmateer

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Day One—The nurseries. Left, Maryann and Ron plan purchases at Action Theory Nursery. Tracy Hines in back.

Right, a Satake Palm (Satakentia liukieuen-sis) at Richard Lyons Nursery.



Day Two

Montgomery Dreaming

By Libby Luedeke

The second day of our weekend involved a tour of Montgomery Botanical Center. Colonel Robert Montgomery was an avid fan of trees long before coming to Florida. He and his friend George Brett had a competition of growing conifers in Connecticut. George had

land in Coconut Grove where he was collecting palms. He decided to extend a challenge to the Colonel to collect palms as well. The Colonel accepted this challenge with a passion.

In the year of 1932 with the help of Dr. David Fairchild, the Colonel traveled Florida collecting specimens from all over the state. He managed to get 150 different trees just in Florida. In that same year he managed to transplant 700 different palms and called

the estate Coconut Grove Palmetum. By the end of 1933 he had transplanted or 1000 species of mature palms in a 10 acre area and spent over \$80,000 dollars to secure them, grade, landscape and plant. A serious collector, eh?

Over the next couple of years Dr. Fairchild used his connections from around the world to collect seeds and the Colonel worked to make even more connections to gather over 900 lots of seeds. By 1939 the Colonel boasted of hav-

ing over 400 different species of palms and cycads. In actuality he had 432 palms, 50 different cycads and 1051 other accompanying plants. By 1940 he had over a 1000 mature palm species. Apparently George wasn't able to beat him.

The Colonel passed in 1953 and his wife Nell continued to secure and expand the gardens for another 30 years. In 1959 she developed the Montgomery Foun-

(Continued on page 4)

Day Two

(Continued from page 3)

dation Inc. to advance science and research-oriented plant collection. In 1998 the gardens named was changed to Montgomery Botanical Center.

We were greeted by Dr. Patrick Griffith, the Executive Director, and his team. He let us know that our visit was greatly appreciated and solidified that with donations to our seedbank along with some potted palms as well. A very generous gift. The potted palms will be gifted to Sugar Mill Gardens in Port Orange and John Rossi's future botanical garden in the making.

After a brief overview of the expectations due to Covid restrictions we split into two groups so we could responsibly social distance. Dr. Griffith led one group and Dr. Larry Noblick, palm biologist, the other. I accompa-

nied Dr. Noblick's group. We began the tour behind the home of the Montgomerys where Larry told us the story of how that particular area was created. I bring this up because it is amusing. At the time the area had a large section of coquina rock that created a high ridge. Nell knowing that a pond lay just beyond that asked requested that the Colonel create a section where she could view that area. The Colonel obliged by securing some dynamite and blasting a whole section of coquina away to create a fabulous view. We aren't sure who enjoyed it more, Nell who got what she desired or the Colonel who got to blow it up.

The team from Montgomery guided, answered our many questions, braved foul weather for a short time and provided us with covered areas to picnic during our tour. Dr. Griffith again spoke of how much they enjoyed our visit because we truly understood and



Day Two: the group is ready for the Montgomery tour. Below, Attalea phalerata from Brazil.

appreciated the efforts made to create and sustain such beautiful grounds. We presented Dr. Griffith with a donation of \$3000 to continue the research and preservation of palms and cycads which is our purpose as a society. And due to our members continued support, we are able to do just that. Thanks to all of you as well.





Day Two at Montgomery: *Cycas micronesica* from Guam.



Day Three: the Mike Harris homeplace in Hollywood. He provided the delicious cookout.

Day Three

Paradise Found

By Libby Luedeke

On Day 3 of our Miami trip, thanks to connections of Jeremy Evanchesky, we were allowed entry to explore Mike Harris's property near Hollywood, FL. Right out of the gate we were enthralled by the extensive collection of palms, cycads and other tropical companions. Greg, who owns the company that assists Mike in caring for the grounds led our tour of the property.

Along the edge of the pond, you are immediately stunned by the *Tahina* palms with fronds large enough to completely cover you if it broke off. Then continuing around there were several varieties of *Attaleas*, *Coryphas*, *Copernicias*, and *Licualas*. As we climbed the hill there were *Arengas*, *Raphias*, *Livistonas*, and *Dypsis* palms. We rounded the backside and found *Syagruses*,

Arecas, baobobs, *Satakentias*, and several cycads. I will let the pictures speak for themselves.

We gifted our host with a local *Tillandsia* from Tropiflora to add to an already extensive collection. Mike made us feel so welcome and he put forth a lot of effort to accommodate us. It is much appreciated.

Our President Dave Hall announced our next meeting on December 5th north of Vero Beach at Jason Baker's home in Micco. We appreciate all of those who joined us this weekend, which was 20, to celebrate our enjoyment of palms and cycads, even in the time of a pandemic. It will be memories we will remember for a lifetime. For those of you unable to join us, we will be doing it again. In the words of Dr. Patrick Griffith, "don't wait so long to come back." I know we'll take him up on that. Thanks for reading my ramblings and hope to see you all in the near future.



Libby took all the pictures that accompany her account of the meeting—with one exception. Here she is giving scale to Mike Harris' biggest Tahina spectabilis.

(Photo by Keith Santner)

The guy in the red shirt is Mike Harris, our genial host on Day Three.



The Freeze of 1835: How Do the Rest Compare?

By Jeremy Evanchesky

No other topic elicits a lengthy and intense conversation at a palm and cycad society meeting in Florida more easily than discussions of our worst freezes and what survived or perished as a result. Every state east of the Rockies is uniquely susceptible to intrusions of arctic air that periodically reset gardens back to their more conservative selves. As the lowest temperatures recorded are often used as the first measure of what could be successful in a given area, it's no surprise that various classification systems isolate this measure at the exclusion of almost all other factors that determine the success of a planting.

Comparing the Freeze of 1835 to other freezes is difficult as there are so few measurements recorded for that freeze. A quick internet search yields 5 low temperature observations; 4 in Florida and one in Charleston, South Carolina. For a comparison of these measurements, the table below shows the absolute low recorded for major freeze events in these locations:

City	State	1835 Temp (F)	1894 1895 Temp (F)	1899 Temp (F)	1917 Temp (F)	1934 Temp (F)	1940 Temp (F)	1957 1958 Temp (F)	1962 Temp (F)	1977 Temp (F)	1981 Temp (F)	1983 Temp (F)	1985 Temp (F)	1989 Temp (F)	1996 Temp (F)	2008 Temp (F)	2010 Temp (F)	2018 Temp (F)
Jacksonville	FL	8	14	10	16	23	17	17	12	19	13	11	7	20	19	25	20	25
St. Augustine	FL	10	16	X	18	23	19	22	16	21	18	16	10	17	21	31	25	X
Picolata	FL	7	16	13	20	26	21	23	17	22	20	16	11	16	23	30	24	26
Fort King	FL	11	X	12	18	20	19	22	16	19	11	16	13	15	20	26	20	25
Charleston	SC	1	12	7	12	18	19	16	14	20	21	18	10	18	19	30	25	22

The data for the table was taken from the following NOAA weather stations:

City	State	Notes
Jacksonville	FL	GHCNDUSW00093852 (1871-1956), GHCNDUSW00013889 (1938-present used beyond 1956)
St. Augustine	FL	GHCNDUSC00087812 (1892-1973), GHCNDUSC00087826 (1973-2017)
Picolata	FL	GHCNDUSC00082915 (Federal Point, 1892-Present)
Fort King	FL	GHCNDUSC00086414 (Ocala, 1892-present)
Charleston	SC	GHCNDUSW00013782 (Downtown Charleston, SC 1893-present)

(Continued on page 8)

Weather Station Data

(Continued from page 7)

In looking at the table, there are a few facts that stand out:

Jacksonville recorded a lower absolute low and St. Augustine tied their 1835 low in the January 1985 freeze event.

The Picolata reading taken on the banks of the St. Johns has never been matched according to records from Federal Point near the same area.

The closest was 11F during the January 1985 freeze.

The Fort King observation near Ocala repeated in 1981.

Downtown Charleston has not reached their 1835 mark according to the available records.

The lows for 1835 were either the coldest or among the coldest for all locations.

There can be no doubt that the 1835 event is among the worst freezes in recorded Florida history. Overall, the best indicator for what temperatures elsewhere might have been come from looking at the numbers during the January 1985 freeze. Another event to check might be the Valentine's Day freeze of 1899, if you are lucky enough to have a weather station close by with records from that event.

Sources for temperature readings during the 1835 Freeze:

<https://www.staugustine.com/article/20140112/NEWS/301129933>

<http://www.floridahistorynetwork.com/blog---floridas-worst-freezes.html>

<https://www.weather.gov/media/tbw/paig/PresAmFreeze1835.pdf>

Three-headed *Phoenix sylvestris*

By Jason Baker

Sue and I bought our property in January 2002. We had wanted to buy at least an acre and we got lucky in that we found 2 1/2 acres in a very nice rural location in Micco that was in our price range.

The house at the time left a lot to be desired but it was livable and the property was fantastic. It was a blank slate so we had lots of room to plant things. We really liked palm trees and Sue, having just moved down from Pennsylvania, was very excited to live in Florida because it was so tropical in comparison to where she came from. We were not members of the palm society yet but we loved palm trees.

In May 2002 we were at Four Cs nursery in Palm Bay and there was a date palm that she really liked so I bought it for her for her birthday. We actually thought



Left, 'normal' Phoenix in 2003, with Jason's late wife, Sue Reilly. Right, as the palm looks today.

that it was a *Phoenix dactylifera* when we first bought it. We didn't realize until later when we got more involved in palms and the palm society that it was actually a *Phoenix sylvestris*.

After about 10 years of age it seemed that the palm was having trouble. We thought it might be dying. The crown became a huge mess and it looked like there were growth spears coming out from different places. We didn't know if it had been damaged by wind or if it had been

struck by lightning or what had happened to it but there was definitely something wrong with it. A friend of mine who trims trees came over and he climbed up there and thinned it out so we could see what was going on.

To our surprise, it had split into three heads. It was amazing. Three heads that were all the same. None of them were stunted or deformed or seemed to have anything wrong with them. Just three perfect *Phoenix sylvestris*



heads growing out of one trunk that was about 15 foot tall at the point where it split. It's like a giant Trident.

Vistas at Mike Cooper's in Hollywood



*Photos by
Matthew
Kennedy*



*Left, ad-
miring
the big
Tahina
spectabi-
lis.*





Around the pond at Mike Cooper's. (Photos by Matthew Kennedy)



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

All right everyone, what an awesome time we all had in South Florida! Perhaps in 20 years, if there is a good side to global warming, Central Florida will be pushed up to zone 10 like Miami. We could all have our own tropical paradise like down there. Except, let's just leave the traffic with them. On Friday, we visited lots of nurseries and palm sales throughout South Florida. I know I found a few items that I could not purchase here in Central Florida. For example, a *Licuala spinosa* had a good price. It's shame I didn't have a large truck; I would have brought a lot more back.

Of course, Saturday was Montgomery, which is always an unbelievable experience. I want to especially thank Dr. Patrick Griffith and his staff for hosting us. They did an excellent job even through the pouring rain. Every minute of their tour was a learning experience about palms in

(Continued on page 12)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

their native habitat and all the great conservation work that they do worldwide. It's an experience that no one should miss.

On Sunday, we all headed to Mike Harris' tropical paradise, home, and palm collection. I want to thank Mike, Greg, and crew for the awesome tour there were so many kinds of palms and even a few that Dr. Dransfield from Kew had a difficult time identifying. What a magnificent place right in the middle of Fort Lauderdale. Once again, thank you, Mike.

Our next meeting will be December 5th at Jason Baker's in Micco, Florida, which is in South Brevard County. Save that date, more details will be forthcoming. Have a great fall.

David Hall



Hybrid Borassus at Jason Baker's place. We'll get a look at it in December.



As far as the *Borassus* goes, the hybrids come from the *flabellifer* at Fairchild. One lone female with nothing to pollinate her but *aethiopums*. There are others but they are usually just labeled as *flabellifer* because they came from a *flabellifer*. Mike Dahme has one at his place in Grant and there's one at FIT that is labeled *flabellifer* but it's obviously a hybrid. Both of those trees are male. I lucked out though and planted two and have a male and a female.

—Jason Baker

From the Editor's Desk

Well, the Miami-area three-day meeting (October 4-6) went ahead despite the problems of distance and the coronavirus. Helped by the events being outdoors, with masks and social distancing.

I don't drive any more but my son took me to the Sunday visit to Mike Cooper's in Hollywood, south of Fort Lauderdale. I was immediately struck by the largest of several *Tahina spectabilis*. As I told a friend, it looked like a *Bismarckia* on steroids. And I did enjoy the ambience of the palms around the irregular pond. I wish I had been close enough to hear the person explaining the palms to the group; there were no plant tags.

However, only one palm there did I truly long for. That was the *Arenga undulatifolia* maybe 15 feet away from where I sat during the day. Huge, feathery, and likely not a survivor in Arctic-Circle Vero Beach. I think I would have enjoyed the visits to several nurseries on Friday, despite the rain. But probably a good thing that I didn't go. Would my common sense have been overcome by any yearning? I mean I'm too old now for a routine strategy in years past: to buy a tiny palm that would form a trunk in 15 years. And, after all, there's not much room left on my half acre that already has more than 100 palms of 80 species. Still, I might well have been susceptible had I seen an unusual palm that doesn't get big. My oldest palms are near or just beyond 50 feet tall. There would be room (right?) to slip a little palm in,

(Continued on page 14)

From the Editor's Desk

if it weren't too expensive for my pocketbook. However, temptation might have happened on Friday, but not on Sunday. Of course, *Arenga undulatifolia* doesn't exactly qualify as a small palm though had a 1-gallon specimen been on offer somewhere, I might have perhaps maybe re-considered my judgment that it is a large palm.

At Mike Harris' spread I was really impressed by his big two-story log cabin with all modern conveniences. It was also evident that he was very happy to have us visit. The chapter paid for the delicious cookout with food prepared by Tracy Hines, Libby Luedeke, and Jeremy Evanchesky.

Something is missing but I couldn't think what. OK, got it! This is around the time of the year when we learn about the Great Newly Discovered Palm. But no new species—which we all must have— has been announced. Another effect of the pandemic. Travel has been heavily restricted or just plain impossible. So, the new species awaits identification in a remote valley in the Andes or the Himalayas. Maybe next year, if all goes well, the New Palm will burst on our awareness.

In December we will visit Jason Baker's place in Micco, southern Brevard County, and another garden in the area. Details are still being worked out. My thanks to Libby Luedeke for re-telling the 3-day adventure in and around Miami.

John Kennedy



A grove of Copernicia baileyana at Montgomery.

(Photo by Libby Luedeke)

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



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The Central Florida Palm & Cycad Society service area includes the following counties:

Alachua, Brevard, Citrus, DeSoto, Flagler, Hardee, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Indian River, Lake, Levy, Manatee, Marion, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Lucie, Sumter, Suwannee, and Volusia.

Below is the link to the World Checklist of Plant Families at Kew, the Royal Botanical Garden in London. If you are unsure of a Latin name or its spelling, this is the place to look for the correct answer

<https://wcsp.science.kew.org/qsearch.do>