

# The Palmateer

Volume 13 Number 2

Central Florida Palm & Cycad Society

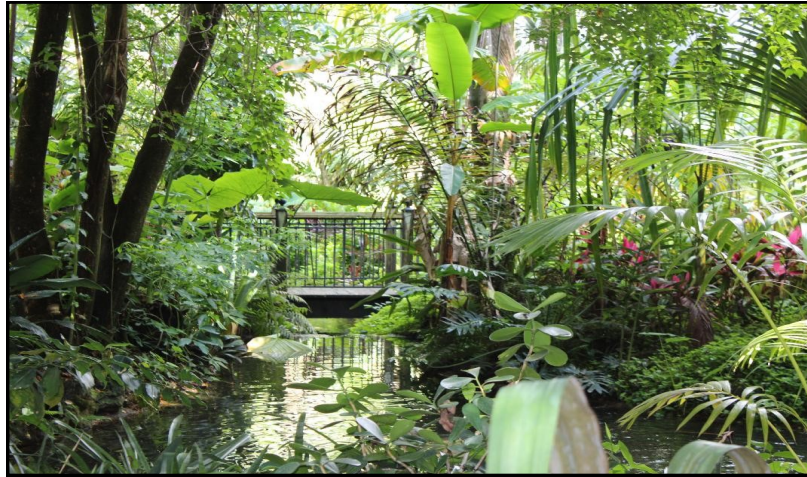
June

## SO YOU WANT TO START A BOTANICAL GARDEN (Part One)

By John Rossi

Every once in a while, a person who studies and collects plants decides that they want to go public with their collection. They never start that way, but things change over time. Often it is a member of another profession (e.g. doctor, lawyer, architect, engineer, or banker who has an avocation). The avocation may become an obsession and the collection may become massive. At that point, one of several things may happen. The collector may share the property with friends and neighbors but when

*(Continued on page 5)*



*Above, a beautiful vista seen by visitors to Leu.*

*(Photo by Libby Luedeke)*



*Right, visitors return from tour at MB Palms nursery.*

*(Photo by Matthew Kennedy)*

## June Meeting in Orlando—to Leu and to MB Palms

By Libby Luedeke

The summer heat didn't keep us away from our summer meeting. I think we all need a break from the everyday world and get some plant therapy. We had a great turnout of

about 50 brave souls attending. We all made it out thanks to lots of shade at Leu Gardens and a fair amount at Mike's as well. As always, we have a lot to be thankful for with Eric

Schmidt, the botanical record keeper at Leu. He never fails to be there for us at Leu Gardens and has a rich knowledge of the palms and cycads. He gave us a rundown of the successes and

*(Continued on page 3)*



CFPACS mem-  
bers on the  
trail at Leu on  
June 12th.



*Sabinaria magnifica, a 'new' palm. We'll  
have to return to Leu to see how well it  
grows.*  
  
*(Photos this page by Matthew Kennedy)*

# The Palmateer

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**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.

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## June Meeting

(Continued from page 1)

failures of the plantings. Also at Leu is the Fairy Door display randomly discovered throughout the grounds. It's such fun to find these in unusual places and yes they have some new ones that are so cute. Since I just did an article last summer for Leu I am adding some pictures of items other than palms that were in magnificent beauty at this time of year.

**Our second** stop was at Mike and Becky Smukall's, nursery MB Palms. They are located on Beth Rd. in Orlando just south of the International Airport. Right away I was super impressed at the variety and orderliness of the nursery. Everything is laid out beautifully.

**We started** the meetings with a little information about the condition of nurseries in Texas after the freezing temperatures they experienced this last win-

ter. Our member Keith Santner as a representative of Sunniland Fertilizers visited Texas recently and was amazed at the devastation that has occurred there. He visited a section in the 8B zone that saw temperatures of minus 10 to 12. Some live oaks are completely gone as well 200-year-old post oaks that were frozen dead. There is a complete pine forest that might not recover as well. Even San Antonio which is in the 9A zone got down to 6 degrees. We would hate to think what that would have done to our area. Nurseries were without power and had buildings that completely collapsed due to snow. With that said, *Sabal minors* and *Yucca rostratas* and *aloifolis* were reportedly untouched or old growth is falling off and new is replacing it quickly.

**Mike then** took us on a perimeter tour of the grounds. He first bought the property in 2011.

Almost all his stock has been started from seed. He has seen temperatures down to 27 degrees. This last winter, 31 degrees was the coldest. He did experience heavy frost. He has a *Kentiopsis oliviformis* next to one of the buildings that only had mild browning of the tips as well as some Betel Nut Palms that are recovering. He has some *Syagrus schizophylla* that has been crossed with Queen Palms that are a new hybrid that promises to be very cold hardy.

**There is** a row of *Licuala spinosa* that are doing well in sun or shade and the cold didn't bother them. The only problem with them is when in full sun they require lots of water. He has plenty of *Rhapis* and some cycads. One cycad in particular which Mike wasn't real sure of the parentage holds a bronze emergent color for quite some time. Some of our visitors guessed it to be a *Cerato-*

(Continued on page 4)



Above, *Copernicia hospita*. Below, *Dypsis pembana*, both at Leu. (Photos by Libby Luedeke)



## June Meeting

(Continued from page 3)

*zamia/coontie* hybrid with leaves that curl, possibly a *robusta*. As we went along you will find pictured a single form *Pandanus monofecta*. It has had no problems with cold and thrives in sun or shade. Mike also has a *Borassus aethiopum* that he has had for about 6 years that is doing very well. He keeps stepping it up and not allowing it to get root bound so it has been growing quickly. It has been in temps down to 27 degrees and has been fine.

**Mike had** the good fortune to get some plants from Bob and Marita Bobick. Bob had been an employee of Disney and apparently had access to some exotic species of palms and cycads, although it's not apparent as to whether they came from there or elsewhere. They had been living in Chuluota and were



moving. They knew anyone else that came in there would just plow down what was there and start from scratch so they invited Mike to come and take what he could. So, he wound up with several large, older *Encephalartos* cycads and some *Chuniophoenix hainanensis* that were well established and quite old.

**Many thanks** to Mike and Becky allowing us to take over their space for an afternoon. It is very special and obviously a labor of love for the family.

*Pandanus monofecta* at MB Palms.

(Photo by Libby Luedeke)



*Lemurophoenix halleuxii* at Leu.

(Photo by Matthew Kennedy)

## So You Want to Start a Botanical Garden (Part One)

*(Continued from page 1)*

they pass away, the property is purchased by a "normal" person unaware of the value of the collection and unwilling to spend the time or energy required to maintain it. So plants are separated and sold, or lost due to neglect. Or the collector may set up a will or trust that maintains the collection but it is not necessarily a public garden. Lastly, the collector or his (or her ) spouse may take the steps needed to create a botanical garden. In fact, a humorous statement often heard in gardening or plant circles is that "the majority of botanical gardens are started by crazy doctors and rich widows!"

**This series** of articles will discuss the trials and tribulations of trying to turn a private collection into a botanical garden. But be warned. It is not for the faint of heart! A massive effort is required. From

paperwork to permits, from plants to parking, and plans to paths, there is an enormous amount of work that must be done! It takes time and money and prayer and luck! It takes knowing the right people in city hall and meeting the right people who recognize the potential of your garden and are willing to help by volunteering, or donating large sums of money. And it takes at least one crazy, motivated, tough, hard-working, knowledgeable, persistent person with a vision.

**Let's get** started! So unless you are filthy rich, the first step, after 15 or more years of collecting, buying, planting, weeding, and fertilizing....is to establish a 501C3 non profit organization. The IRS and the state of Florida, require at least 2 more crazy people er...I mean people who believe in the project and are willing to work to make it happen. They will become the Treasurer and Secretary



*Dr. John Rossi in his Hastings garden when CFPACS visited in October 2018.*

*(Photo by Libby Luedeke)*



*Young Acanthophoenix crinita seen at Leu.*

*(Photo by Matthew Kennedy)*

(a Vice president is optional). They will become the first Board of Directors. A 501C3 non profit organization is allowed to solicit donations and not pay income taxes.

**But there** is much, much, much more that needs to be done and we will discuss this in upcoming articles! Dr. John Rossi, President, St. Johns Botanical Garden and Nature Preserve.

# Playing Small Ball

By Jeremy Evanchesky

**For those** who are basketball fans, the NBA game has seen multiple teams have success using smaller lineups without a true center. In the past, the Houston Rockets and Golden State Warriors have faced off with lineups stacked with outside shooters that force defenses to spread out, leaving them vulnerable to drives to the hoop and mistakes in defensive rotations that leave shooters wide open.

**For this** article, playing small ball in palm terms is defined as growing palms that typically top off at 30 feet or less. The palms that fit into this category usually fit comfortably into a suburban lot and under trimmed oak canopy if they need shade. Some have above ground trunks while others are acaulescent. The clumping types offer you the opportunity to recover from a record freeze with sprouts from the root ball.

**There are** many advantages to using a palette of smaller palms. Smaller palms:

- Allow you to grow more palms on the smaller lots that are becoming the norm during the real estate boom.
- Can be protected more easily during cold snaps if that becomes necessary, and maintenance can be done more easily since the fronds are typically within reach of a pole saw.
- Most can be grown in the dappled light under canopy trees, protecting them from frost and drought stress.
- If your goal is to make a passive income from your plantings, you can cram an inordinate amount of these palms onto a property and harvest seeds without the need for much more than a step ladder.

*(Continued on page 7)*



*Below, Zombia antillarum stays small enough to keep out of foot traffic areas in Lakeland, FL.*



*Above, three of our all-star small ballers at Lakeland City Hall: Alagoptera arenaria (front), Licuala grandis (center), and an Areca cat-echu Dwarf variety (back with some leaf burn).*

## Playing Small Ball

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- Are typically safer than their larger counterparts during tropical storm conditions in that, if they blow over, they aren't likely to destroy your house or your car.

**Most of** our native palms can fill this niche, with *Sabal minor*, *Sabal etonia*, and *Serenoa repens* able to be used as garden perennials, hedges, or border plantings with little or no risk of ever having cold damage. *Pseudophoenix sargentii* and *Thrinax radiata* make excellent arborescent palms for smaller properties, giving the planter the option to have a native fan palm or a native pinnate palm in the landscape that won't dominate the property. *Acoelorrhaphe wrightii* and *Rhapidophyllum hystrix* offer mid-height or short clumping palms, respectively.

**Sometimes a** new twist on something old can liven up the landscape. Palms in the *Phoenix* and *Butia* genera have been around in Florida for decades. However, while many will quickly recognize a *Phoenix roebelenii* as a small ball palm, fewer are familiar with *Phoenix acaulis* which can give you more of the standard date palm look with a similar small form factor. If you can find it, *Butia archeri* gives you a palm in the *Butia* genus that is similar in size to a large croton.

**One fear** of going with a small lineup is that it would potentially impair the ability to provide a tropical look to the landscape. With palms in the *Ptychosperma*, *Adonidia*, and even *Cocos* genera, you can still provide a tropical look. For *Cocos*, be sure to get a true dwarf like 'Fiji Dwarf' rather than a semi-dwarf like Green Malayan Dwarf or you'll have a bigger than expected palm sooner than you think.

**If you** prefer more drought tolerance in your landscape, *Hyphaene coriacea*, *Chamaerops humilis* in all of its forms, and *Nannorrhops ritchiana* are certainly solid choices that should never need the watering can once established.

The list is not meant to be a complete list of palms that will fit into your all-star small ball lineup, but rather a draft guide. For genera like *Chamaedorea* and *Arenga* there are simply too many options to list. There are others that are borderline like *Livistona* and *Latania* that could go over the prescribed height but will take a while to do it.

**The list** below comes with a modified zone assignment scheme to split some of the zones into smaller intervals. This is particularly helpful in hardiness zone 9, where the difference between what will grow at the top of the zone vs. the bottom of the zone is quite stark. As an example, Zone 9a-1 is for areas in zone 9 where the average annual low is between 20F and 21.99F. There is quite a difference from Zone 9b-2 where the average low for the last 30 years is between 28F and 29.99F.

**Keep in** mind that monoecious palms can reproduce from only one plant while dioecious require a male and female.

(Continued on page 8.)

# Playing Small Ball

(continued from page 7)



*A mature Ptychosperma elegans fills the gap between the sidewalk and the parking garage, taking full advantage of the Urban Heat Island in Lakeland.*

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Genus	Species	Typical Max. Height (ft)	Rec. Min. Hardiness Zone	(M)onoecious (D)ioecious	ZONE	Avg. Annual Low (°F)
Acoelorrhaphe	wrightii	20	9a-1	M	07a-1	0-1.99
Adonidia	merrillii	25	10a-1	M	07a-2	2-3.99
Allagoptera	arenaria	10	9b-1	M	07a-b	4-5.99
Areca	catechu 'Dwarf'	12	10b-2	M	07b-1	6-7.99
Arenga	engleri	10	8b-2	M	07b-2	8-9.99
Arenga	ryukyuensis	10	8b-2	M	08a-1	10-11.99
Butia	archeri	6	9a-2	M	08a-2	12-13.99
Chamaedorea	cataractarum	6	9b-1	D	08a-b	14-15.99
Chamaedorea	costaricana	20	9b-1	D	08b-1	16-17.99
Chamaedorea	metallica	12	9b-1	D	08b-2	18-19.99
Chamaedorea	microspadix	10	9a-1	D	09a-1	20-21.99
Chamaedorea	radicalis	15	8b-1	D	09a-2	22-23.99
Chamaerops	humilis	10	8b-1	M	09a-b	24-25.99
Cocos	nucifera 'Fiji Dwarf'	25	10a-1	D	09b-1	26-27.99
Cryosophila	stauracantha	25	9b-2	M	09b-2	28-29.99
Dypsis	lanceolata	20	10a-1	M	10a-1	30-31.99
Dypsis	lutescens	25	9b-1	M	10a-2	32-33.99
Hyophorbe	lagenicaulis	20	10a-1	M	10a-b	34-35.99
Hyophorbe	verschaffeltii	25	9b-2	M	10b-1	36-37.99
Hyphaene	coriacea	20	9b-1	D	10b-2	38-39.99
Johannesteijsmannia	altifrons	20	10a-2	M		
Kerriodoxa	elegans	18	9b-1	D		
Licuala	grandis	10	10a-1	M		
Licuala	peltata	16	9b-1	M		
Lytocaryum	weddellianum	10	9b-1	M		
Nannorrhops	ritchiana	20	8a-1	M		
Phoenix	acaulis	7	9a-1	D		
Phoenix	roebelenii	12	9b-1	D		
Pseudophoenix	sargentii	25	9b-2	M		
Ptychosperma	elegans	20	10a-1	M		
Ptychosperma	macarthurii	25	9b-2	M		
Rhapidophyllum	hystrix	8	7a-1	D		
Rhapis	excelsa	15	8b-2	D		
Rhapis	humilis	12	9a-1	D		
Sabal	etonia	6	7b-2	M		
Sabal	minor	8	7b-1	M		
Serenoa	repens	12	8a-1	M		
Syagrus	schizophylla	15	9b-1	M		
Thrinax	radiata	20	9b-1	M		
Trithrinax	campestris	20	9a-1	M		
Zombia	antillarum	12	10a-1	M		



# Playing Small Ball

Photos by Jeremy Evancheskey



*A Cocos nucifera 'Fiji Dwarf' at Fairchild in 2018.*



*Adonida merrillii fully mature and setting fruit next to a 2-story house in Lakeland, FL.*



*The diminutive but attractive Phoenix acaulis taking it easy at Lake Wire in Lakeland.*



*Butia archeri in Lakeland.*

# Cycad Love<sup>s</sup>

**By Libby Luedeke**

**You know** that look that you get every time you say you are a member of the Central Florida Palm and Cycad Society and they say, “what is a cycad?” I used to have that same look. Now we have a garden full of them. I’m not sure I will ever be able to name them the way my husband does because they seem to defy the rules of shape and form among species. Lord knows I have tried. The first sentence out of my mouth when we have a new visitor is “be careful, everything bites.” **I’m going** to highlight one of our favorites, the *Macrozamia moorei*. It’s from the family *Zamiaceae* from Queensland, Australia named after Charles Moore the director of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney. The name of the genus

comes from the Greek word *macro* meaning large and *zamia* meaning loss or damage which describes the pinecones after they have declined. It is an upright slow growing cycad with a rounded head and blue-green foliage. The largest one recorded in the wild grew to over 30 feet, although I don’t expect to ever see ours get even close to that. **The *Macrozamia*** is a cone bearing plant that has male or female cones. It likes full sun to light shade and in a well-drained soil only irrigating occasionally. It is also hardy to 25 degrees Which works well for our 9B zone. We’ve had her approximately 16 years and only moved her once. Definitely a showstopper.



Macrozamia moorei

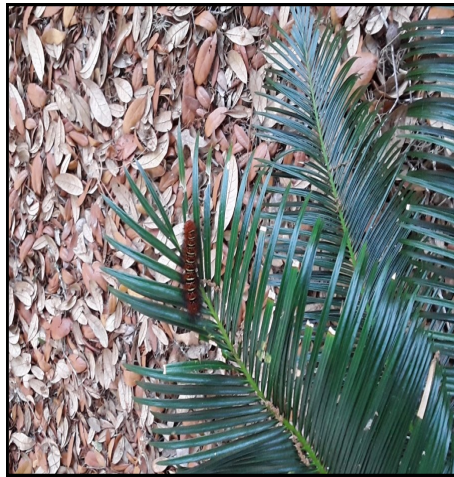
(Photo by Libby Luedeke)

## By Paul Duchesneau

**Throughout April**, hundreds of these woolly caterpillars marauded day and night across my 1 acre lot in northern Citrus County. They were travelling in all directions, reacting to what I suppose are some pheromonic rhythms that have evolved to make this critter a little too successful. These caterpillars were feeding on all the cycad genera that I cultivate. They were observed mid-month on several other landscape perennials but did little damage to them. So I assume that they were just scouting for the next closest cycad. This is what an infestation looks like. Sadly, this is my fourth consecutive year of combat.

**After seeing** my first Echo Moth caterpillar, I researched and discovered that this larva has a varied diet that includes plants in my landscape: oak, cabbage palm, croton, king sago and *Za-*

## Echo Moth Caterpillar *Seirarctia echo*



*Echo Moth caterpillar on cycad.*  
(Photo by Paul Duchesneau)  
*Echo Moth (from BugGuide.net)*



*mia floridana*. Coonties are the caterpillar's favorite plant and until 2020 they were attacking only coonties. In my landscape, this caterpillar now targets all my cycads and other poisonous plants such as desert rose. Until the arrival of *Seirarctia echo*, the only threat to cycads in west central Florida was frost and cycad aulacaspis scale (CAS). CAS only attacks the *Cycas* genus such my king sagos and my *Cycas panzhihuaensis* that have been recovering from CAS.

**The preferred** method of removal of caterpillars is mechanical. For a two week period in April, I was removing 25 to 30 per day. The literature states that these woolly caterpillars can sting. I have not experienced this, but gloves are recommended. Caterpillars prefer to feed mornings and evenings, but the Echo, at peak infestation, can be seen all day long. Vigilance is needed particularly when new growth is emerging.

Repeated attacks of new growth can and have killed coonties. When mechanical removal is insufficient, B.t. *Bacillus thuringiensis* is the next weapon. Liberally spray all leaves, leaflets, cones, and entire caudex surfaces. I repeated spraying every few days. These caterpillars will die after ingesting any plant material that has been sprayed. This will happen quickly, and the pest most often remains on the leaf or plant surface after death. **By the** end of May, the current infestation appears to have ended. My removal rate is down to 1 or 3 per day. I have lost more coonties than I care to count but others are beginning to recover. **This is** a cautionary tale for fellow CFPACS members. If you see the Echo Moth or the caterpillar, it can be a problem. I do not believe this moth has any redeeming attributes.

## From the Editor's Desk

**There** I was, following along with the others on the trails at Leu. I was struck once more by how fantastically beautiful Leu is and how exquisitely maintained. The setting alone on the south side of Lake Rowena is perfect. The serene big house that now holds offices and a gift shop is the first thing the visitor sees when coming into the garden to park. I have to admit, however, that I've enjoyed Leu in the past in February when the camellia garden is in full bloom, must be over 100 plants. The lake to the north modifies cold snaps. And Hey! The palms look pretty good in February, too.

\* \* \* \*

**However,** I've reached the advanced age where I no longer spot a smallish palm that will

form a trunk in 15 years and lust for it. Doubtless a good thing since my 'estate' is only a half-acre on which the house and its approaches occupy much of the area. There's little room left for any additional palms. I walked along part of the trail with our own Ray Hernandez, current IPS president and once, years back, the CFPACS president. He pointed out to me a beautiful small palm that I can't recall seeing before, *Ravenea hildebrandtii*, and I discovered that, yes, I had an immediate yen to possess one. And, surely, I could squeeze it in somewhere, right? But then I searched online and couldn't find a Florida vendor though it seemed readily available in California.

\* \* \* \*

**Saw some** familiar faces. Ted Langley told me that he had something that came from my garden. But I can't recall what it was. And Rob Branch was there. Do you think he has any ideas similar to John Rossi's? I didn't see Ron Hart and Mar-yann Krisovitch and hope that they are OK. MB Palms where we ate lunch is an interesting place though I didn't go on the tour. I just wore out (Excitement tires us kids), didn't hang around for the auction. My son took me home. But I am wondering who wound up with the bromeliad, *Aechmea gamosepala*, that I donated for the auction.

\* \* \* \*

**Libby Luedeke's** account of the meeting mentions Fairy Doors at but didn't explain what they are.

I saw them but am willing to believe that everyone else in the U.S. knows what they are. I thought they were cute, hung on trees and palms in the garden. The 'doors' are artwork, small imaginative entries into the world of fairies, intended to enchant children. Apparently this has been a summer exhibit at Leu for several years. I had thought that Microsoft and Amazon between them had eliminated any possibility of fairies in the world. Of course, there are still (old) folks who suspect that all this stuff about computers and the web is actually magic, masquerading as technology.

## First Quarter 2021 Seedbank Report

**Thanks again** to Montgomery Botanical Center for their seed donations last year as they are still keeping us busy. I have sent seeds far and wide again across the US and a few other countries. If anyone has seeds coming for *Cocothrinax crinita* let us know as we have requests for them.

**If you** have some interesting exotic seeds, let us know, Inventory is low again. Sales for the last quarter were about \$207.00. Thanks so much for all your past and future support.

**Libby and Jerry Luedeke**

[theseedbank@yahoo.com](mailto:theseedbank@yahoo.com)

## Treasurer's Report

**It was** another busy day and our auction was exciting! We earned \$534.00 from the donated items. Took in \$95.00 in memberships and \$300 in t-shirt sales.

**We even** had a few vendors! This earned us 20% of their sales for another \$52.40. Always nice to bring in some cash. A full report of expenditures and income for the year to date will be provided at the next board meeting. Thanks all for your patience with checkout. Special thanks to Libby Luedeke and Loretta Devine for your help with everything else!!!

—Tracy Hines

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**Wow! We** had a great turnout for our Summer Meeting at Leu Gardens and MB Palms in the Orlando area. Jeremy and Tracy estimated the turnout at about 60 people in attendance.

**First, let** me thank Eric Schmidt for a fantastic tour. He is always very informative. His knowledge of the garden's history, growth and climate response is invaluable to our group. Leu Gardens is always a wonderful adventure when you are in the area.

**Second, I** would like to thank Mike at MB Palms for hosting us at his nursery and making arrangements for our fabulous BBQ! It is amazing to see the tropical palms and other plants he is cultivating. I personally gained from seeing how his nursery is set up. I am so glad the weather held out for us and we dodged the thunderstorms that were forecast. A light sprinkle as we shut down helped to cool things off. Hopefully, everyone took time to meet the Bison.

**Our next** meeting in October is planned for the Tampa Bay area. Stay tuned for further details, We're still in the planning stages but considering a return to Sunken Gardens (reciprocal memberships are accepted) and the Gizella Kopsik Arboretum. Have a wonderful summer, stay cool!

**Dave Hall**



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*Eric Schmidt (center) on the trail at Leu with lowdown on the Taraw Palm, Livistona saribus.*

*(Photo by Libby Luedke)*