

# The Palmateer

Volume 15 Number 2

Central Florida Palm & Cycad Society

June 2023

## Southern Charm—Savannah & Area Meeting June 3 & 4

By Libby Luedeke

A great time was had by all at our joint meeting in Savannah, Georgia. We were welcomed by Tom McClendon of the Southeastern Palm Society and also joined by the First Coast Palm & Cycad Society. I'm going to start with a little history about the area as told by Tom.

**Georgia began** as colony founded by General James Oglethorpe. The

idea behind it was to create a buffer between the wealthy colony of South Carolina and the Florida territory held by the Spanish. Because Georgia was at the same latitude as northern Africa and southern China, it

was reasoned that crops grown in those regions would be successful in Georgia. In 1733 Savannah became the main settlement and Oglethorpe commissioned the settlers to grow gardens that had in-

stallations of citrus, olives, and grapes.

**In 1833** there was a devastating freeze that wiped out almost all of it. Then Sea Island cotton became the crop of choice which is a long staple cotton that

could be combed by hand. At that time short staple cotton was near impossible to comb and way too painful. Until the cotton gin was invented later. Unfortunately, cotton is hard on the land, robbing it of nutrients and leaving it in bad shape. Because of the coastal location and swampy areas, rice took its place in Georgian

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*Tom McClendon briefs visitors on what they will see in the Coastal Georgia Botanical Garden.*

*(Photo by Jeremy Evanshesky)*



*Getting a good look at Georgia Coastal Botanical Garden.*

*(Photo by Jeremy Evanchesky)*

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## 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**

Central Florida Palm & Cycad Society

3225 13th Street

Vero Beach, Florida 32960-3825



## Savannah June Meeting

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culture. This leads us to our first destination, the Coastal Georgia Botanical Garden which had been a rice plantation.

In the early 1900's the land was owned by Mrs. H.L. Miller. She had a neighbor that had brought bamboo back from a visit to Japan and started growing it on the property as well. One of her employees, a Mr. S.B. Dayton, sold bamboo shoots to local restaurants. As the owners aged and knew the land would eventually be sold to new owners that would probably have no interest in their

crops, Mr. Dayton reached out to renowned plant explorer David Fairchild.

After countless letters and little response he made his way to the offices of the United States Agriculture Department in Washington D.C. Finally, in July of 1915, a Mr. Bisset, of the USDA visited. He documented and photographed the timber bamboo grove. Dayton and Bisset were able to convince Fairchild that this was indeed a valuable area.

Fairchild was able to convince a wealthy benefactor named Lathrop to purchase the property which

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*Starting the tour (above) and (below) onward to the Sabal Garden.*

*(Photos by Jeremy Evanchesky)*





## Savannah June Meeting

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was then leased to the USDA for a \$1. For 60 years the USDA used the property to research important agricultural plants for the southeast. Even Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone supported research for developing latex. In 1975 the USDA started phasing out research functions due to cost cutting. In 1983 the land was deeded to the University of Georgia for education and research. By the 1990's an advisory committee was formed and campaigned for improve-

ments. Today the location is still under the auspices of the University and the UGA cooperative.

**In 1996 the** Southeastern Palm Society began to look for a place to have a public palm collection as a sort of home base. They searched multiple places and decided on Savannah and the CGBG welcomed them. Initially, the Southeastern Palm Society was given free rein to plant palms anywhere within the facility, and between 1996 and 2002, more than 200 individual palms were planted, many of which

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*Left, various hybrids in the CGBG. Below, visitors get a good look around.  
(Photos by Jeremy Evanchesky)*



## Savannah June Meeting

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remain on the property. A few were truly on the cutting edge for the time period, as the Internet was in its infancy and there were a number of palms new to cultivation at that time. For example, A nursery owner in Brookville gave them a *Livistona decora*, formerly known as *Livistona decipiens*. He said go ahead and try this, but it'll probably die. Twenty-five years later, it's still here.

**Also in** this period, Tom McClendon had read about the wide variation of *Sabal minor* in habitat. He won-

dered if some of the differences observed in diverse environments were due the environments themselves, or did *Sabal minor* possess the genetic diversity to produce true dwarf palms in the panhandle of Florida and the trunked palms that were seen along the Mississippi River drainage in Louisiana. Tom and Joe Le Vert began to collect specimens of *Sabal minor* ranging from eastern North Carolina to Oklahoma to the Hill Country of Texas. In 2002, Tom and Joe planted these and many others in a designated area of the Garden, creating a



*Ceratozamia latifolia* at GCBG. Tom McClendon-with host gift *Cycas panzihuensis* x *taitungensis*.

(Photos by Libby)

beautiful area with arguably the most diversity of *Sabals* anywhere. The director of CGBG, seeing the beauty and diversity of the palms allowed other sections of the gardens to be planted as well along with a few cycads too. A truly lovely place to visit.





*On the Armstrong campus of Georgia Southern University. At right, Zamia pumila. Below, a tiki hut. Bottom, recognize anyone here?*

*(Photos by Jeremy Evanchesky)*





*A private garden in Brunswick, Georgia. That's a Livistona saribus in the center. (Photo by Jeremy Evanchesky)*







*Growing in a private garden in Brunswick, Georgia. From left: Bismarckia nobilis, Jubutia, and Chamaedorea microspadix.*

*(Photos by Jeremy Evanchesky)*





## Hailstorm Damage to Palms and Other Tropical Plants in Hastings, FL

By Dr. John Rossi  
President, St. Johns Botanical  
Garden

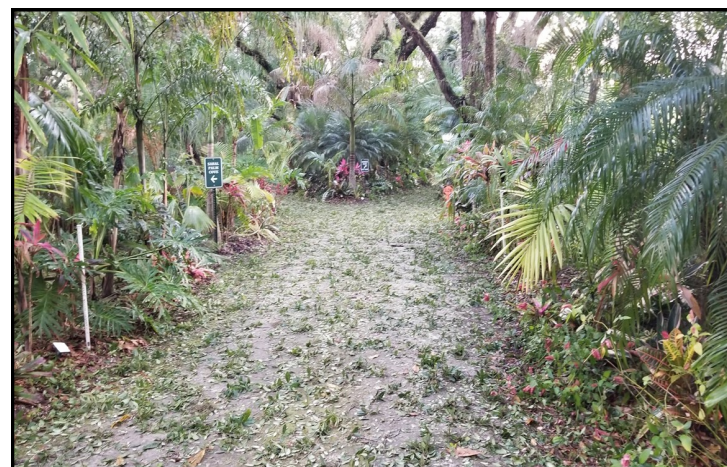
**There are** many reports of cold damage to palms, cycads, and other tropical plants, however, reports of hailstorm damage to such plants are rare. This may not be because of the rarity of hailstorms, but rather the fact that it is difficult to quantify what is doing the damage--i.e. Is it the wind, physical trauma from being hit by a chunk of ice, or the cold exposure if said ice sits on a leaf while it thaws? Questions to be answered to understand the type of damage expected include: Wind Speed, Duration of the Storm, and the Size of the Hailstones.

**This Spring**, Central and North Florida endured a week or so of destructive hailstorms. On April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at approximately 5:15 PM, a hailstorm occurred at the St. Johns Botanical Garden in Hastings, Florida. Winds associated with the storm were



measured up to 70 miles per hour, and the most intense part of the storm lasted for approximately 20 minutes, with periods of rain, lesser wind gusts, lightning and thunder extending for up to an hour. The hail ranged in size from 1 to 5 cm (2 inches, or the size of a golf ball). It remained visible on the ground for approximately 30 minutes, until it melted completely.

**Countless small** branches and leaves were knocked



*Left, hail on the ground. Right, scattered leaves and small branches nearly everywhere after the hailstorm at SJBG.*  
(Photos by John Rossi)

off the numerous oaks, sweetgums, and maples on the property, leaving a mess similar to that following a hurricane, and more importantly lodged in or covering the leaves and branches of the plants on the ground. They were also lodged in the leaflets of various palms and cycads. Broad leafed tropical plants, such as philodendrons (many species) demonstrated

torn and tattered leaves with abundant holes. Bromeliads and agaves of many kinds showed large spots from where the hail was trapped on the leaves and stayed in contact with the leaf while it melted. Various cactuses out in the open appeared bruised, while others showed no damage.

**An interesting** pattern of damage occurred in the palms, with those pinnate leaf varieties showing **more** damage than

those palmate leafed varieties. This would not intuitively be the case, since palmate leafed varieties would theoretically present more surface area to the falling hailstones, and therefore presumably show more damage. Pinnate leafed palms, particularly one group, the King Palms, *Archontophoenix* (multiple species) showed damage to the crown shaft and another leaf near the crown

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## Hailstorm Damage

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shaft, where they were twisted, and later a necrotic spot occurred near the base of the twisted area and the leaf was lost. All trees appear to be recovering, however. Several other pinnate palms of multiple species appeared to have older, lower, or more lateral leaves that had been pushed downward, and some also appeared twisted, and ultimately began to die. Were they weighted down by ice or just whipped around by the wind, or both? This was seen in several young or midsize Queen Palms and the fine leafed varieties of *Dypsis* (*Chrysalidocarpus*) such as *Dypsis saintelucei*. Again, only younger trees showed this pattern. *Beccariophoenix fenestralis* (two young trees that still had connected leaflets) leaves seemed to act like a net, catching flying small branches and hailstones, but the damage appeared minimal.



Perhaps the most surprising thing was the lack of damage to most of the nearly 400 species of palms, in the face of what appeared to be near hurricane force winds, as evidenced by the major number of leaves and branches on the ground from the oaks and other “true” trees. Keep in mind that many of these palms are purposely positioned under or near large

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*Philodendron and Schefflera, left, showing major damage while an Australian fan palm hybrid leaf shows no damage. Agave neglecta, right, a Florida native, with major hailstorm damage.*



## Hailstorm Damage

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“nurse” oaks which may have provided them a great deal of protection. And those palms out in the open included many very cold hardy palmate leafed palms from the genera *Copernicia*, *Livistona*, *Sabal* and *Trachycarpus*. Apparently, the wind didn’t damage them and the flying hailstones just “bounced off,” fortunately without leaving scars. One thing’s for certain: in Florida we’ll always get more opportunities for such severe weather, “research”!




*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana* showing necrosis on the leaf closest to the crownshaft after the hailstorm. A mineral stained glass captured the size and distribution of the hailstones during the storm.



IPS September  
Biennial in New  
Caledonia

**2024 IPS New Caledonia Eight Days in Review: Concentration on the Southern Provinces habitat**



- **Day 1:** Sept. 22, 2024 **General Arrival**, Le Méridien Nouméa Hotel Check-in, Welcome Reception
- **Day 2:** Sept. 23rd : Rivière Bleue Botanical Reserve. 64 Miles
- **Day 3:** Sept. 24th : La Madeleine Forêt du Pic du Pin AND Prony , South, Goro, Yaté
- **Day 4:** Sept. 25th: Col d'Amieu, Plateau de Poro & Côte Est, Kua Valley. (**East Coast**)
- **Day 5:** Sept. 26th: Nodela Botanical Reserve (**West Coast**) and Rivière du Cap
- **Day 6:** Sept. 27th: Col d'Amos (Very North and a long 12 hour day, 3.5 hour each way w/ stop at ). Only North Province viewing
- **Day 7:** Sept. 28th: Forêt de palmiers Royaux de Moindou (tallest R. oleracia). Mont Koghi and Lavoix Property
- **Day 8:** Sept. 29th: Tontouta nickel mine, Pierson propriety, and Farewell Banquet.
- **Departure** September 30th or start of the Post-Tour.

**Checklist of 27 Possible Species planned for viewing**

<p><b>BASSELINIA:</b></p> <p>Basselinia deplanchei (Pending)</p> <p>Basselinia eriostachys</p> <p>Basselinia favieri</p> <p>Basselinia glabrata</p> <p>Basselinia gracilis</p> <p>Basselinia iterata</p> <p>Basselinia moorei</p> <p>Basselinia pancheri</p> <p><b>BURRETIOKENTIA:</b></p> <p>Burretiokentia dumasii</p> <p>Burretiokentia grandiflora</p> <p>Burretiokentia hapala</p> <p>Burretiokentia koghiensis</p> <p>Burretiokentia vieillardii</p>	<p><b>CHAMBEYRONIA:</b></p> <p>Chambeyronia divaricata</p> <p>Chambeyronia houailouensis</p> <p>Chambeyronia macrocarpa</p> <p>Chambeyronia magnifica</p> <p>Chambeyronia oliviformis</p> <p>Chambeyronia pyriformis</p> <p><b>CLINOSPERMA:</b></p> <p>Clinosperma bracteale</p> <p>Clinosperma vaginata</p> <p><b>CYPHOKENTIA:</b></p> <p>Cyphokentia cerifera</p> <p>Cyphokentia macrostachya</p>	<p><b>CYPHOPHOENIX:</b></p> <p>Cyphophoenix alba</p> <p>Cyphophoenix elegans</p> <p>Cyphophoenix fulcita</p> <p><b>SARIBUS:</b></p> <p>Saribus jeanneneyi (Pending)</p> <p>Non-endemic: Cocos nucifera</p>
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## ***From the Editor's Desk***

The Savannah excursion sounded like it would be—and actually was—a delightful adventure. My son offered to take me and I was really tempted. But reality intervened, reminding me that I am 87 years old and that my stamina is not what it once was. Two days of hard driving, together with much walking, would mean that I would wear out sooner than I could imagine.

Looking at Jeremy's pictures of the beautiful houses and gardens in Brunswick, I was reminded of driving from my hometown, Philadelphia, in the summer of 1962 to visit my best friend in college. He was in the Navy and was stationed in Brunswick. We had a good time together in a lovely place.

I missed seeing all the familiar faces but expect to see them again in October at our in-state meeting.

***John Kennedy***

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Thanks everyone who joined us in Savannah with all three societies. For such a distance, it was a wonderful crowd. Many thanks to Tom for an excellent tour of Coastal Botanical and Georgia Southern.

Our auction raised \$400.00 which we would like to donate to the garden of our membership's choice. Please email your personal choice to [thines61@icloud.com](mailto:thines61@icloud.com) and we will tally the results.

Our next meeting will be on the west coast. Stay tuned for further details on this October meeting. Have a wonderful summer!

**David Hall**

My thanks to my son Matthew who once again helped the old guy when he got confused.



### PayPal Tutorial

**Here is** how to make a payment to CFPACS using PayPal

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56 Autumn Oaks Drive

The Hills, TX 78738

Regular membership,  
\$60, other levels of membership (including free),  
quarterly journal

<http://palms.org>

### The Cycad Society

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Lake Worth, FL 33467

Regular membership,  
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Lakeland, FL 33813

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## BOARD LIST

### PRESIDENT

David Hall  
250 North Causeway  
New Smyrna Beach, FL 32169  
[president@cfpacs.com](mailto:president@cfpacs.com)

### EAST VICE-PRESIDENT

Jerry Luedeke  
117 E. Connecticut Ave.  
Edgewater FL 32132  
[eastvp@cfpacs.com](mailto:eastvp@cfpacs.com)

### CENTRAL VICE-PRESIDENT

Terrence Williams  
420 La Paz Dr.  
Kissimmee, FL 34743  
[centralvp@cfpacs.com](mailto:centralvp@cfpacs.com)

### WEST VICE-PRESIDENT

Keith Santner  
4354 Broad Porch Run  
Land O Lakes, FL 34638  
[westvp@cfpacs.com](mailto:westvp@cfpacs.com)

### NORTH VICE-PRESIDENT

John Rossi  
2641 Park Street  
Jacksonville, FL 32204  
[northvp@cfpacs.com](mailto:northvp@cfpacs.com)

### IMMEDIATE PAST-PRESIDENT

Ron Hart  
6701 Lake Kirkland Drive  
Clermont, FL 34714  
[pastpresident@cfpacs.com](mailto:pastpresident@cfpacs.com)

### SECRETARY

Libby Luedeke  
117 E. Connecticut Ave.  
Edgewater FL 32132  
[secretary@cfpacs.com](mailto:secretary@cfpacs.com)

### TREASURER

Tracy Hines  
250 North Causeway  
New Smyrna Beach, FL 32169  
[treasurer@cfpacs.com](mailto:treasurer@cfpacs.com)

### MEMBERSHIP

Jeremy Evanchesky  
4722 Hulse Lane  
Lakeland, FL 33813  
[membership@cfpacs.com](mailto:membership@cfpacs.com)

### PALMATEER EDITOR

John Kennedy  
3225 - 13th St.  
Vero Beach FL 32960  
[palmateer@cfpacs.com](mailto:palmateer@cfpacs.com)

### CFPACS SEED BANK

Jerry & Libby Luedeke  
117 E. Connecticut Ave.  
Edgewater, FL 32132  
[seedbank@cfpacs.co](mailto:seedbank@cfpacs.co)

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The logos of the three regional palm societies that met in June.

