

# THE PALMATEER

Volume 15 Number 4

Central Florida Palm and Cycad Society

Holiday 2023

## A Series of Unfortunate Rain Events

By: Jeremy Evanchesky

This past year forced two of our meetings to be rescheduled, an unprecedented happening in our society's history. The Fall meetings was originally scheduled for Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, and was pushed back until Saturday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, due to steady overnight rain. Following suit, our Holiday 2023 meeting had to be moved from December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, to January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024, due to what looked like a subtropical storm on weather radar, complete with breezy and rainy conditions atypical for late fall in Central Florida. On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, the decision was made to cancel the meeting due to yet another stormy Saturday predicted in Sarasota.

Looking back in society history, our last visit to the Sarasota area was on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020, just before stay-at-home orders were issued during the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The visit featured a tour of Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in the morning, followed by a visit to Rob Branch's private garden in the afternoon.

The meeting would be well attended, with our membership chair joking with the Selby staff that we had guerilla planted *Amorphophallus titanum* (Corpse flower ) in the garden. Initially terrified, the staff was relieved when we let them know we were kidding.



A rare sight in Florida, two *Howea forsteriana* at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in March 2020.





Above: A healthy *Nannorrhops ritchiana* near the water at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in March 2020.  
Below: The CFPACS tour included the desert garden at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens in March 2020.



As a year, 2023 was difficult for some of our members on the Gulf coast of Florida. The Tampa area was plagued with an extreme drought this summer. Other areas look statistically sound, but the bulk of their rain fell on one or two days of the month and left 3-4 weeks of scorching temperatures with no relief. All of this while parts of Southeast Florida recorded as much rain as could be expected in Hawaii.

Disease continues to present problems for palm growers as many *Sabal palmetto*, Phoenix spp., *Syagrus romanzoffiana*, and *Washingtonia robusta* have been relegated to the mulch pile by Lethal Bronzing, Fusarium Wilt, Ganoderma, palm weevils and various crown rots. As landscapes continue to adapt, demand for Lethal Bronzing resistant palms like *Livistona decora* and its close relatives *Livistona nitida*, *Livistona saribus*, and partially resistant *Livistona chinensis* continue to increase.

The holiday season last year was frustrating in most areas, with some locales spending 72 hours or more below 50F and recording two freezing or near-freezing nights on Christmas Eve and Christmas.

Not all news is bad, though. This year, the holiday chill was rather benign. Lakeland added *Thrinax radiata* to its list of flowering and fruiting palms, and spring will be here before you know it.

As we head into another year, we hope that everyone and their garden fares well in 2024!



## Background Information:

- **Spring 2020 Meeting:**
  - **Meeting Post:** <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/62275-central-florida-palm-cycad-society-spring-meeting-sat-03072020/>
  - **Photos from Marie Selby:** <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/62804-cfpacs-03072020-part-i-marie-selby-botanical-gardens-sarasota-fl/>
- **Rob's Garden - 2018:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dm-p\\_9NbkkrE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dm-p_9NbkkrE)
- **Rob's Garden 2010:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ewyhV8YXy4>
  - The 2010 link was a CFPACS meeting, featuring Ray Hernandez, Christian Faulkner, and Chuck Grieneisen



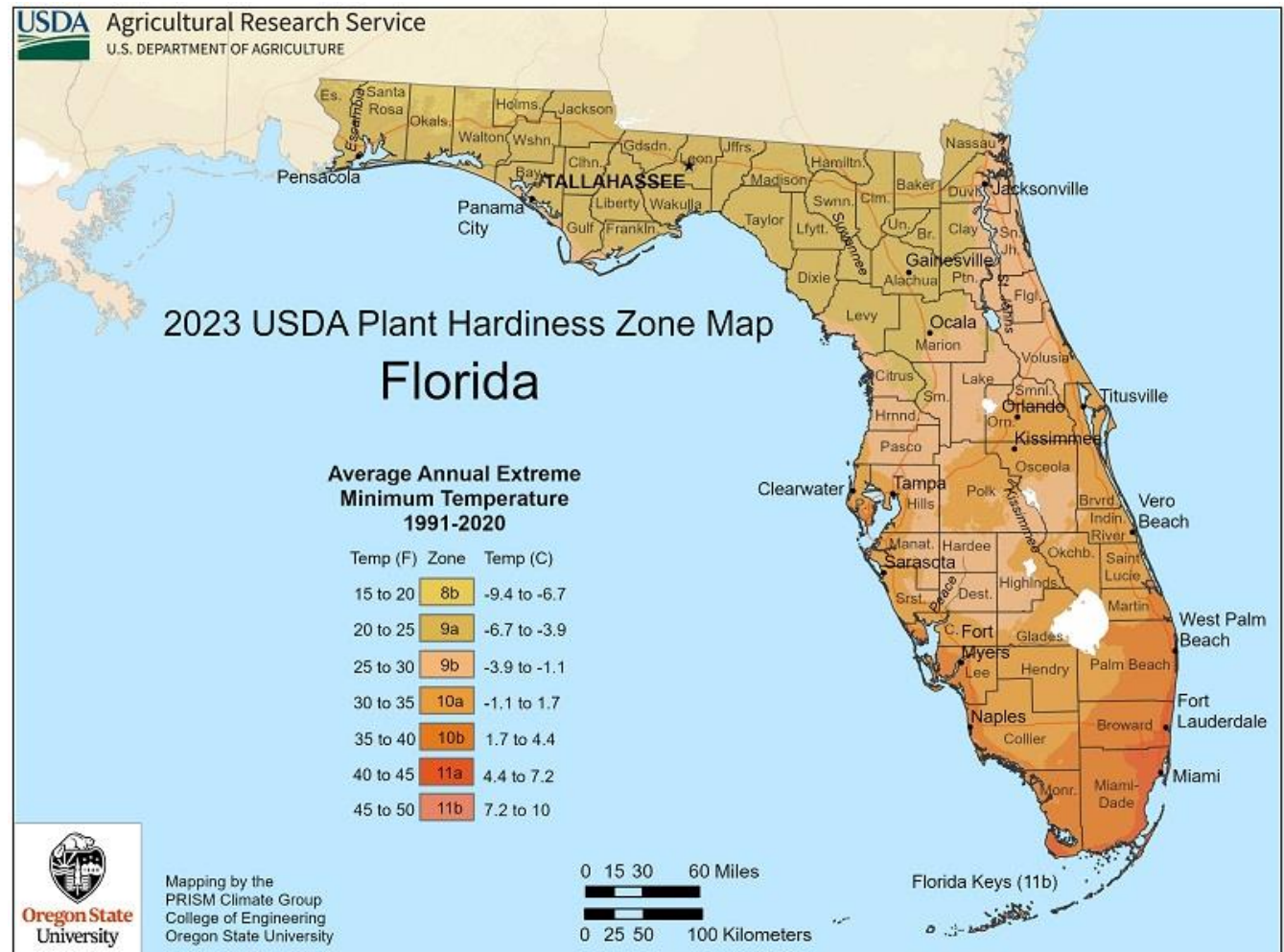
*Above: Little did we know at the time that this box at Rob Branch's garden was a harbinger of times ahead in March 2020.*

## The New USDA Zone Map: A Reflection of a Changing Landscape

By: Jeremy Evanchesky

Over the years, the USDA zone map has seen a plethora of changes. When the standard zones were split into two separate zones denoted with the letters “a” or “b”, the span of 5°F improved on the span of 10°F that lumped climates that are much more forgiving for some plants in with areas where they are difficult or impossible to grow. As a result, the cooler zone 9a in the northwest portion of Central Florida was separated from areas along the coast in northeast Florida down through the milder parts of the peninsula along Interstate 4 and further south, which were classified as 9b.

The new 2023 map retains this split but looks radically more forgiving than the 1990 map. Portions of what used to be zone 9a and 9b are now part of zone 10a on the new map. Part of the shift is due to the data set from 1991-2020 used to generate the map, effectively removing the freeze events from the 1970s and 1980s that reset any landscapes that were tempting fate. The cold events in the 1990s and 2000s not as severe in most areas of the state. Favorable inland microclimates due to large bodies of water, urban development, relief from surrounding terrain, or tree canopy prevented a total kill of tender palms. January 2010 showcased the difference, with some areas outside the city limits of Orlando and Lakeland making it into the teens while the city interiors stayed in the mid-to-upper 20s.



The newly released 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map based on data from 1991-2020.





**Above:** *The International Drive coconut palm in Orlando's ICON Park outside of Charley's Steakhouse anchors the more recent planting scheme in inland Central Florida.*

Anyone who has been to the CFPACS tours at Leu Gardens in Orlando or Hollis Gardens in Lakeland can attest that the milder overall winters have allowed palms once considered too tender to become mainstays in parts of Central Florida.

With the waning reliability of palms in the Phoenix, Washingtonia, Sabal, and Syagrus genera due to Lethal Bronzing and Fusarium Wilt, the milder winters have been tonic for landscapes that would be dependent upon the Livistona genus for a subtropical flare. It is no longer uncommon to see more tropical genera such as Ptychosperma, Archontophoenix, Adonidia, or Veitchia in widespread use in the milder microclimates.

If the plantings of these palms were subject to replacement every 5 years, the cost might be considered too prohibitive for adoption by municipalities and homeowners. Fortunately, specimens older than 15 years can be found flowering and full of fruit in favorable sites.

Of all palms, the coconut palm has long been the ultimate measure of how tropical one would consider an area. The lifespan of a coconut in most of the inland areas was considered to be less than or equal to 5 years. Several examples exist in each of the urban areas along Interstate 4 from Sanford to Tampa that have large, fruiting coconut palms. These same cities have flowering and fruiting crownshaft palms, in some cases, used as street trees and decorative plantings near their City Hall entrances.

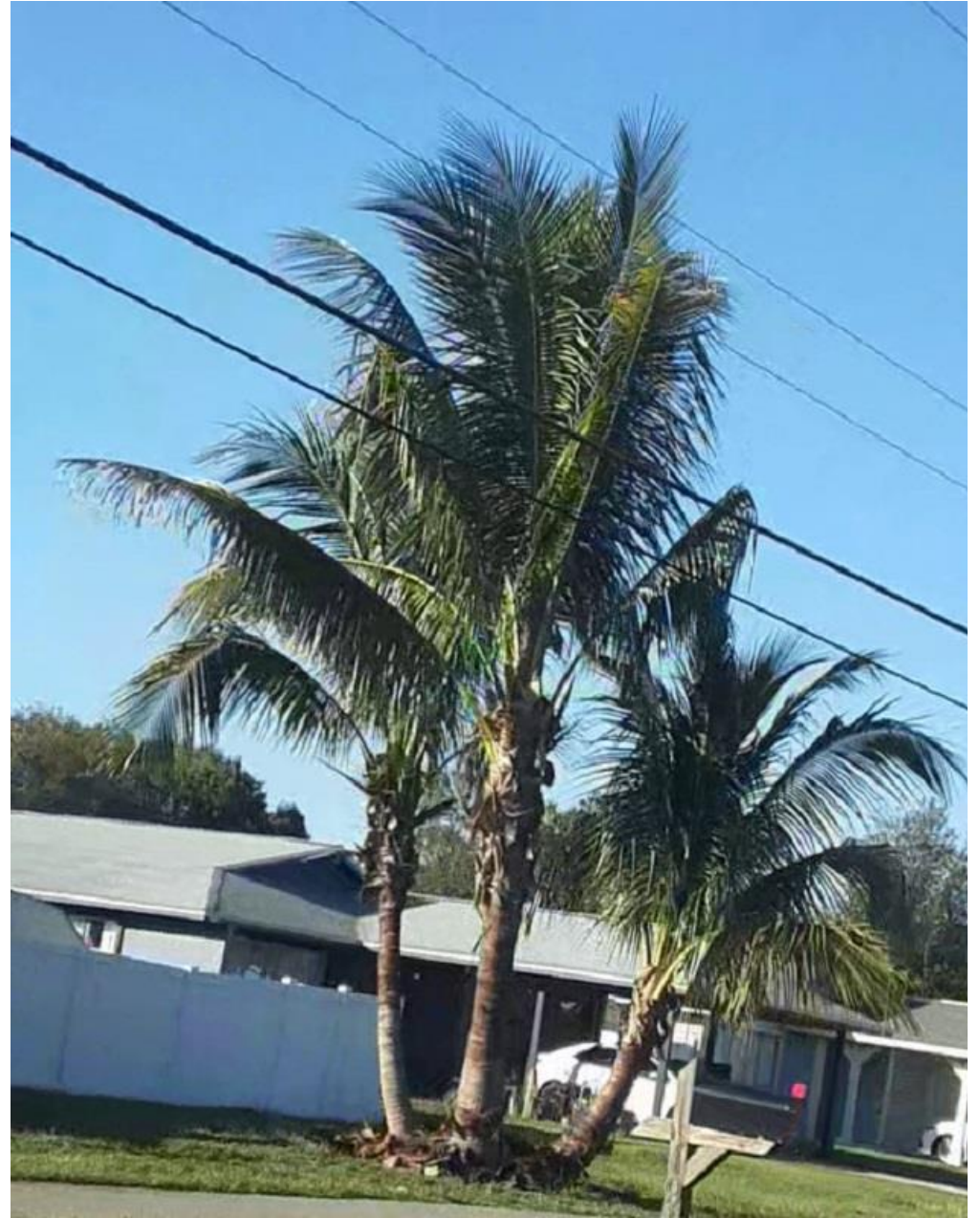
Eventually, another nasty freeze will hit the reset button on the landscapes that have adopted a more risky approach. Until then, long live zone 10a!



*A pair of fruiting coconut palms in Lakeland, FL.*



*A triple planting of coconuts in Lakeland, FL.*





## Zone Maps Throughout the Years:

1936 Map: Based on Data from 1895-1935



1960 Map

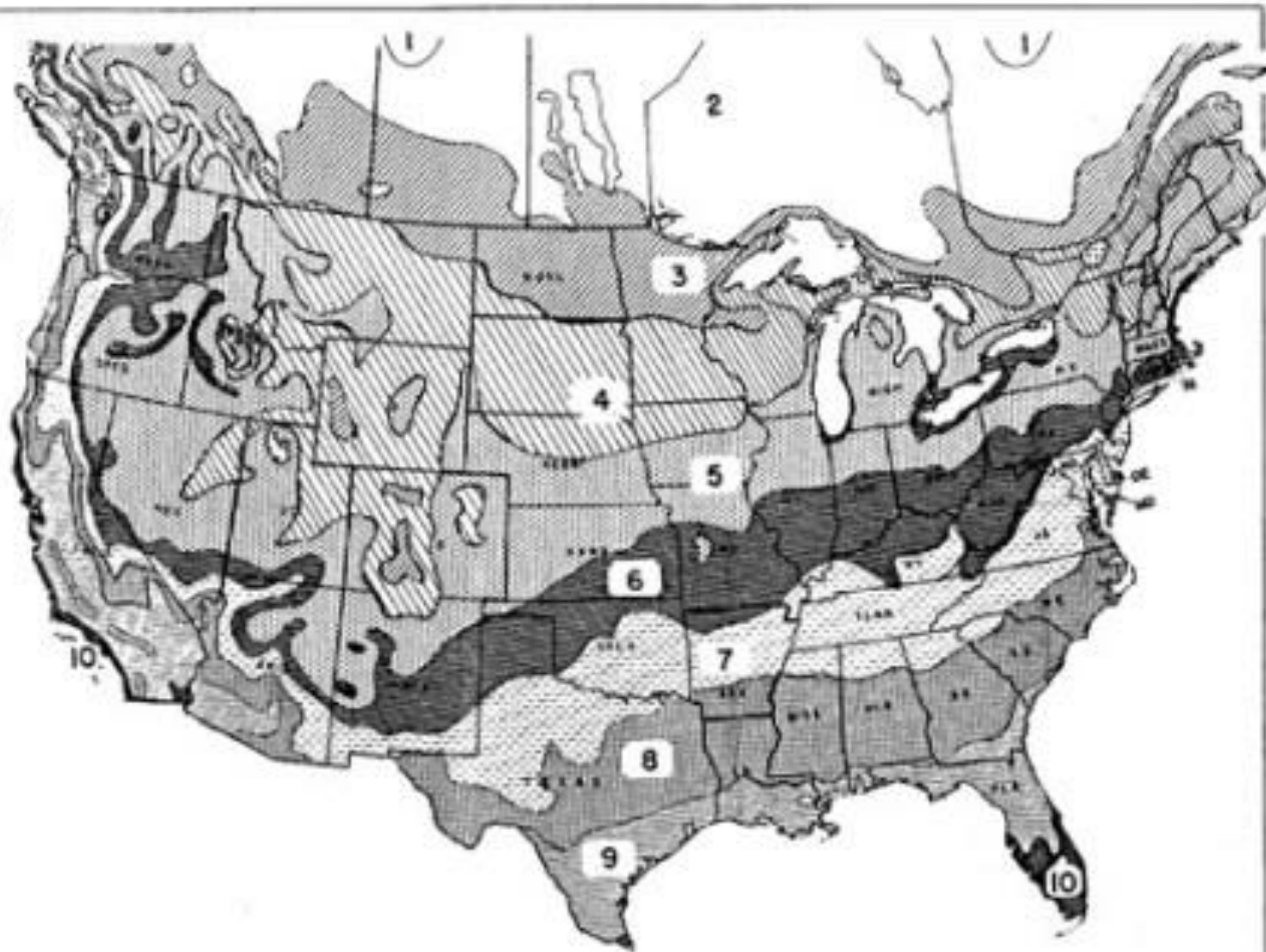
# USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map

1960

**RANGE OF AVERAGE ANNUAL WINTER TEMPERATURES FOR EACH ZONE**

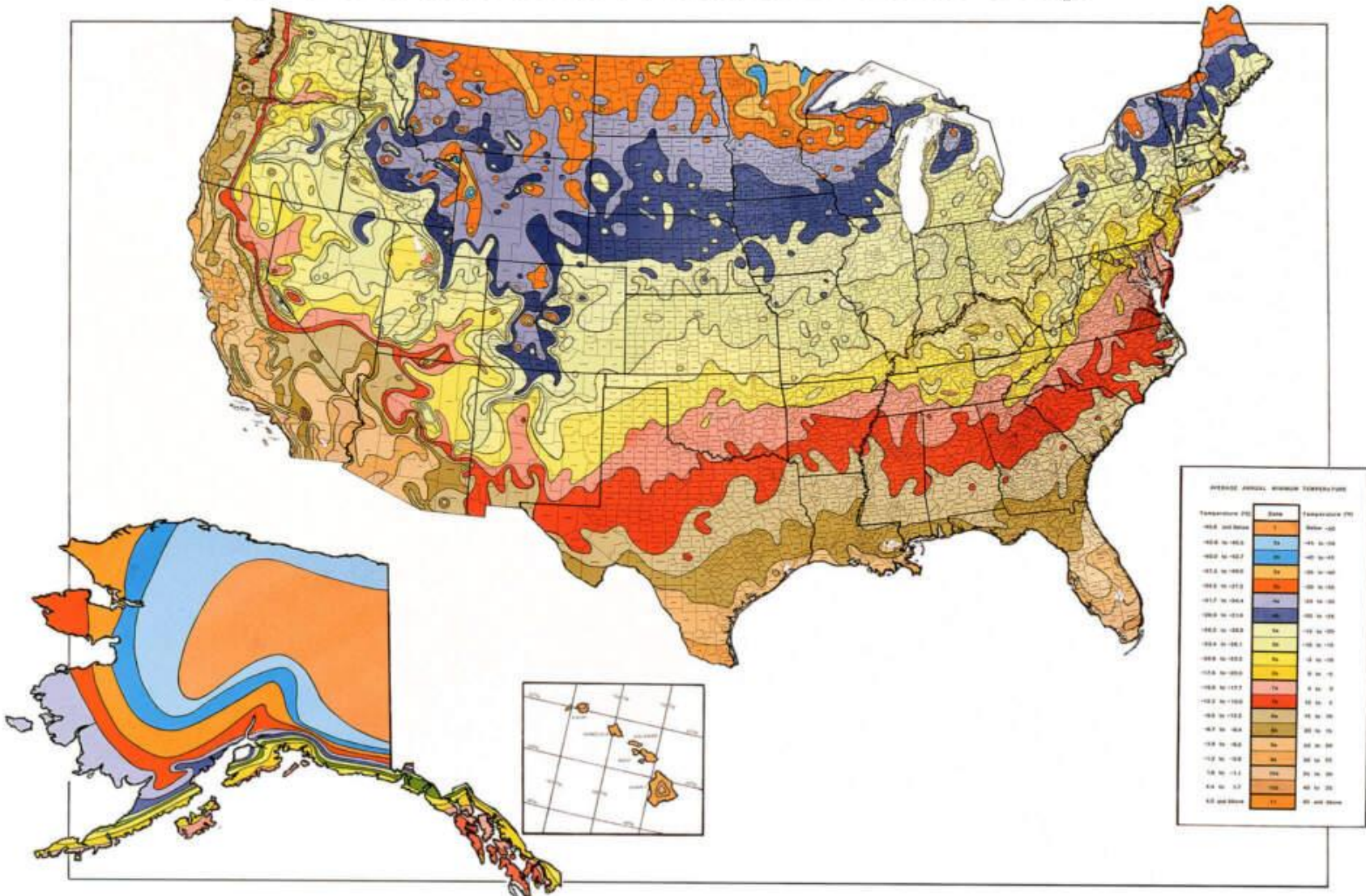
ZONE 1	BELOW -50°F
ZONE 2	-50° TO -40°
ZONE 3	-40° TO -30°
ZONE 4	-30° TO -20°
ZONE 5	-20° TO -10°
ZONE 6	-10° TO 0°
ZONE 7	0° TO 10°
ZONE 8	10° TO 20°
ZONE 9	20° TO 30°
ZONE 10	30° TO 40°

EACH ZONE BASED ON A 10°F (3.4°C) DIFFERENCE IN AVERAGE ANNUAL WINTER TEMPERATURE.

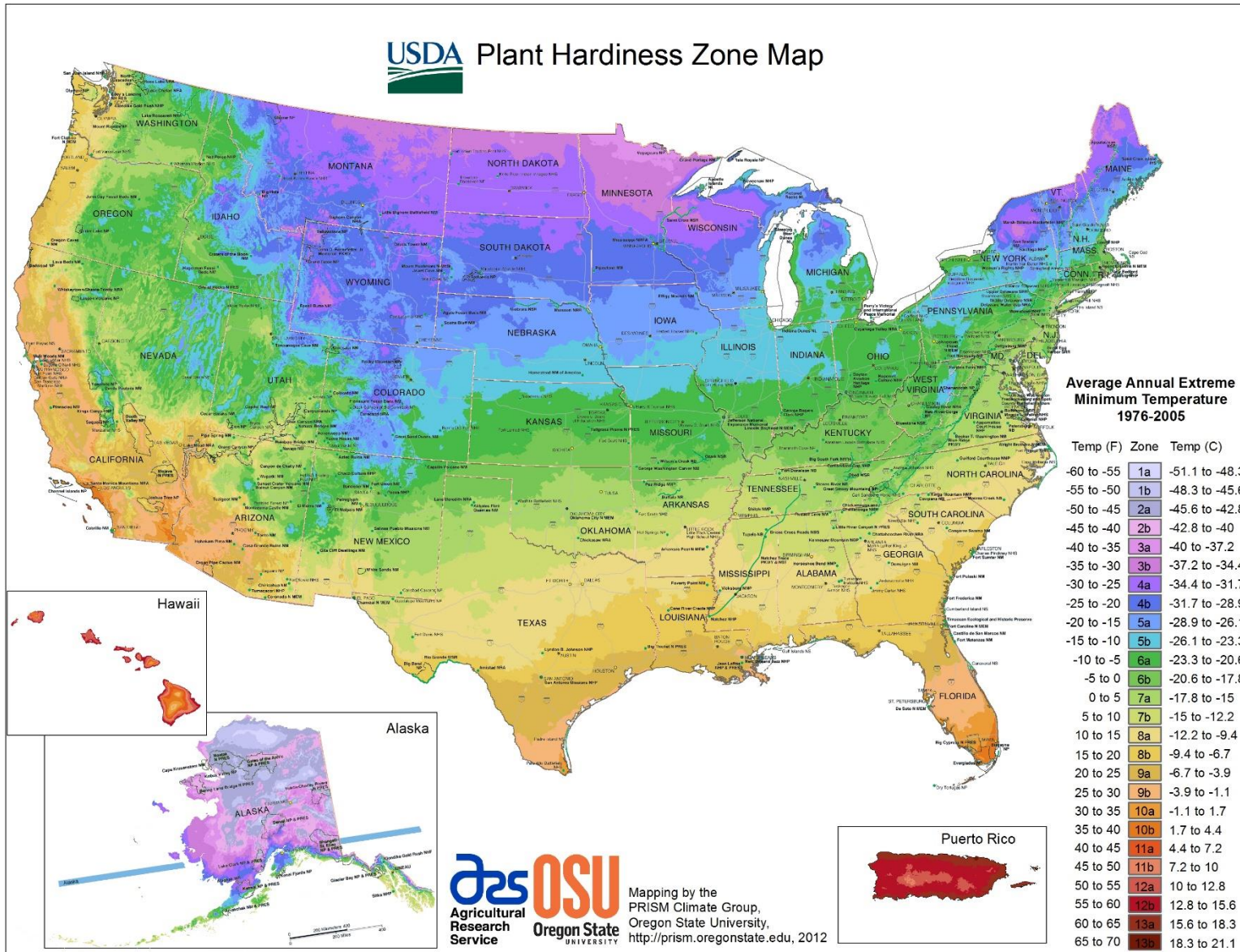




# 1990 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map



2012 Map: Based on Data From 1976-2005





## Additional Information:

- **2023 USDA Interactive Map:** <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/>
- **NOAA Climate Normals – Quick Access:** <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/us-climate-normals/>
- **PalmTalk Links:**
  - **General 2023 USDA Map:** <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/81956-general-2023-usda-plant-hardiness-zone-map-discussion/>
  - **Florida 2023 USDA Map:** <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/81918-2023-usda-zone-map-for-florida/>
  - **West and Southwest Florida Zone Map:** <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/73496-west-sw-fl-zone-map/>
  - **Florida Freeze and Weather Station Data:** <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/66320-florida-freeze-and-weather-station-data/>
  - **Florida Winter 2023-2024:** <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/81465-florida-winter-2023-2024/>
- **Florida Maps:**
  - **Impact Freezes 1 (1835 – 1977):** <http://tinyurl.com/4twhncp3>
  - **Impact Freezes (1981 - Jan. 2022):** <http://tinyurl.com/2s4fymk3>
  - **Impact Freezes (Dec. 2022 - Future):** <http://tinyurl.com/4xyx52p5>
  - **Unofficial 2022 Zone Map w/ 50yr data and expanded zones:** <https://tinyurl.com/48pvem3y>
  - **Record Low Zones for All Florida Stations as of 2022:** <http://tinyurl.com/255pdv9t>
- **NWS Current Weather Map:** <http://tinyurl.com/2yd6nazv>
  - This map includes the standard airport stations and other stations that are of commercial quality.
- **WeatherUnderground WUndermap:** <https://www.wunderground.com/wundermap>
- **YouTube:**
  - **A Colorful History of American Plant Hardiness Zones:**
    - Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vC3CmVJpTjA>
    - Text Version: <http://tinyurl.com/5n79st7y>

# Announcements

## Next Meeting:

The Spring 2024 meeting is scheduled for Saturday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at the Langley garden in Lutz from 10am to 4pm. More details will be made available as they are finalized. For any questions or concerns, please feel free to post on Facebook or email [cfpacs.membership@gmail.com](mailto:cfpacs.membership@gmail.com).

## Any Interest?:

If anyone is interested in accepting the role of Palmateer Editor, please let us know at the Holiday Meeting or by contacting us at:

[cfpacs.membership@gmail.com](mailto:cfpacs.membership@gmail.com)

## Email Issues:

If you tried to reach any of the board members using the links on the CFPACS website and did not receive a response, your email may not have been delivered. The issue is currently being investigated in conjunction with our webmaster.

Please send email correspondence to [cfpacs.membership@gmail.com](mailto:cfpacs.membership@gmail.com) if you do not have a personal email address for the officer you wish to contact until the issue is resolved.

## Plant Sales:

Spring sales announced soon!





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# Join Us!

## Join the Central Florida Palm and Cycad Society (CFPACS)

<https://cfpacs.com/org/membership-info/>

You can renew via PayPal or check at the site above.

If you are a new member renewing by mail or your information has changed, please download a membership form at the site, print, complete, and return it with your payment.

## 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 the payment process, please indicate whether your payment is for membership or seeds or t-shirts in the message field.

## Join the International Palm Society (IPS)

<https://palms.org/membership/>

**Free and paid memberships available.**

**CFPACS is an affiliate of the IPS.**

## Join the Cycad Society

<https://cycad.org/content/membership/>

**Multiple membership options available.**