



2024 Summer Meeting Recap

Hosting a summer meeting in Central Florida is difficult due to the limited number of indoor venues and the inordinately hot summers we've experienced over the last two years. Fortunately, we were able to secure a site in Lakeland where we could get a reprieve from the daytime heat. The outdoor portion of our tour began at Barnett Park, which is just down the Francis Langford Promenade from Hollis Garden, the first site of our Fall 2022 meeting.

The tour started outside of the Lake Mirror Center in the shadow of a large triple planting of *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*, flanked by parking lot beds adorned with flowering *Hyphaene coriacea* and *Adenium obesum*. As we made our way around the Peggy Brown Pavilion, long beds filled with *Zamia furfuracea* guided us to our tour's next stop; a planting of *Carpoxydon macrospermum* and *Satakentia liukuensis*, with a sprawling *Phoenix reclinata* hybrid above the cement.

As we walked the sidewalk toward the new apartments on Orange St., we were blessed with cloud cover that helped keep the morning temperature from quickly rising into the 90F range. The cloud cover stuck around as we walked past the parking lot for Hollis Gardens, still hosting numerous *Caryota obtusa* and parked full of families enjoying the water at Barnett Park. Jerry Luedeke stopped at the edge of the parking lot to speak to the tour about the cycads present in the medians and outside of Hollis Gardens. The palm enthusiasts were glued to the large *Chrysalidocarpus leptocarpus* and the enigmatic *Archontophoenix teracarpa*. The City of Lakeland and its denizens like to include Easter Egg plants in their gardens. The corner of Hollis Garden near the parking garage holds a hidden *Areca vestiaria* for those who know where to look.



Archontophoenix cunninghamiana triple near the Lake Mirror Center.



Phoenix reclinata hybrid outside of the Peggy Brown Pavilion.

The Lakeland Electric Parking Garage is decorated with *Polyalthia longifolia* growing up to the second and third levels of the building. They keep perfect spacing due to their upright growth habit and help guide the tour to the epicenter of the city's palm collection, City Hall. Attendees from the last tour quickly noted that the Florida Citrus Mutal building had been demolished since the Fall 2022 tour. Among the palms that attracted the most attention were the *Chambeyronia oliviformis* in the east entrance planter of City Hall and the enormous *Chrysalidocarpus leptocheilos* near the west side of the entrance. As of this writing, the aforementioned Teddy Bear, *Cryosophila warscewiczii*, and *Chambeyronia macrocarpa* near the entrance have been removed.

We rounded out the tour by circling the Orange Street Parking Garage to visit the *Ptychosperma elegans* and *Satakentia liukuensis* at the southeast and southwest corners of the garage, respectively. The grounds are judiciously planted with *Pseudophoenix sargentii*, *Encephalartos ferox*, *Allagoptera arenaria*, and a host of other palms and cycads planted by the city. On the way back to our cars, those in the group who weren't camera shy posed on the stairs leading from the promenade to Hollis Gardens for a team photo. Folks were advised as to where to park at Lake Wire, and we departed for our second site.



A few proud tour goers take a photo outside of Hollis Garden.

The second leg of the tour began across the street from the Lake Wire Post Office in a palm collection that was made possible in part by CFPACS member Tom Broome. At the beginning, palm enthusiasts are treated to *Syagrus schizophylla*, various species of *Arenga*, copious numbers of *Livistona saribus*, and plenty of new plantings spurred by the development of a luxury apartment complex across Sikes Blvd. The group stopped briefly to discuss their professional opinions on a palm that looked like an *Attalea* from a distance, but ultimately had the characteristics of a Coco Queen hybrid (*Syagrus schizophylla* x *Syagrus romanzoffiana*).

A short walk west of the first exotic palm bed brings you to the native palm bed, where Florida's natives can be seen flowering and reproducing on their own. In addition to the usual suspects, *Acoelorrhaphe wrightii*, *Thrinax radiata*, *Roystonea regia*, *Coccothrinax argentata*, *Pseudophoenix sargentii*, and *Leucothrinax morrisii* have all flowered and produced viable seeds in this area.

On the way around the corner, the former Phoenix bed has been razed due to Lethal Bronzing, and new specimens of tried-and-true palms like *Copernicia alba* and *Brahea armata* have taken their place. A 40-foot *Saribus rotundifolius* marks the start of the next section full of *Livistona* species, *Beccariophoenix alfredii*, and fruiting *Hyphaene coriacea*. The sidewalk down Sikes Blvd ends with a gorgeous *Brahea armata* that shows no signs of humidity stress or rot. The trunk is large and the crown is full, almost as if the climate shifts to desert for the small 10-foot section it occupies.

The final exotics bed is a short walk past the LVIM building, starting off with less common *Sabal* species such as *mauritiiformis*, *domingensis*, *causiarum*, and *blackburniana*. Long ago, this bed held a Maypan coconut and an *Arenga pinnata*, but those have since went by the wayside. Close to their old positions, a *Pritchardia* and a *Latania lontaroides* now give the garden some color. A large *Caryota obtuse* now stands tall over a stump of its former planting bed mate that was killed in a fire. After viewing all of the remaining palms in the *Coccothrinax* and *Caryota* genera, the sun was getting high and it was time to head to our final destination.



Jerry Luedeke educates the cycad-curious members of the group.



Our membership chair shows off *Satakentia liukuensis*.



Our membership chair and president dole out the host plants.

The group quickly checked their GPS and realized that they were only a few minutes away from Bonnet Springs Park. There, we would enjoy a lunch catered by Mission BBQ and a presentation on French Guiana by Chip Jones. As the presentation ended, it was time to host our auction and then present the staff at Bonnet Springs Park with ecologically friendly native palms and cycads. We had plenty of leftover food, even after our membership took plates home. Since the staff at the park were so gracious and helpful in setting up the final leg of the tour, we donated the food to the staff.



The *Brahea armata* at Lake Wire.



Caroxylon macrospermum at Barnett Park



The Teddy Bear, Root Spine Palms, and Chambeyronia macrocarpas in this area are now removed. RIP.



Hyphaene coriacea with infructescence.

Additional Links:

- **Original Meeting:** <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/83832-central-florida-palm-cycad-society-summer-2024-meeting/>
- **Fall 2022 Meeting:** <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/73966-central-florida-palm-cycad-society-fall-meeting-sat-10222022/>