



2024 Holiday Meeting Recap

Our last meeting of 2024 was originally scheduled to take place at the garden of Rob Branch in Sarasota, Florida. Hurricane Milton and Milton teamed up to force the society to reschedule this site for the Holiday 2025 Meeting. Dr. Rossi graciously offered to host us on short notice at St. Johns Botanical Garden and Nature Preserve (SJBGNP) in Hastings, Florida.

Attendance at the meeting was impacted by a flu that was making its rounds. Several members were unable to attend as they became ill right as the meeting approached. We hope that everyone is feeling better and recovered from their illness in time for the holidays.

There were some new faces at the meeting that had long wanted to attend a meeting. They couldn't have picked a more perfect time and place to attend, with comfortable weather all day and a large garden full of surprises. One of the biggest surprises for new attendees, lifetime members, and everyone in between, was the new garden bed full of *Rhopalostylis* species. Even expert growers can attest to the difficulty of growing the members of this genus in Florida.

As the tour progressed, the membership was treated to many palms that are difficult to grow and difficult to source. A few members were chatting about *Johannesteijsmannia altifrons* just before Dr. Rossi showed one off at the garden. *Chrysalidocarpus decipiens*, a palm that is difficult to grow, but very cold tolerant, was planted in a bed made completely of pea gravel to facilitate drainage.



Dr. Rossi starts the tour.



The group observes Dr. Rossi's new *Rhopalostylis* plantings.



Another rare gem - *Johannesteijsmannia altifrons*

Additional Links:

- CFPACS Events Page: <https://cfpacs.com/org/events/>
- 2024 Holiday Meeting: <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/85612-central-florida-palm-cycad-society-holiday-2024-meeting/>
- SJBGNP Anniversary: <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/85828-central-florida-palm-cycad-society-sjbgnp-anniversary-celebration/>
- Plantae-palooza 2025: <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/87378-plantae-palooza-garden-festival-saturday-february-22nd-2025/>
- 2021 Holiday Meeting: <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/71053-central-florida-palm-cycad-society-holiday-meeting-sat-12042021/>
- SJBGNP Opening Soon: <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/71456-st-johns-botanical-garden-hastings-fl/>
- 2018 Fall Meeting: <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/58209-the-garden-of-dr-john-rossi-hastings-fl/>

At the midpoint of the tour, we stopped to hold a memorial for John D. Kennedy, our late editor and lifetime member. A *Chambeyronia oliviformis* was planted in remembrance of him and his contributions to the society. His absence is felt at our meetings and in our publications, with his biting wit and unique writing style that is inimitable.

The tour wrapped around the arid garden, the pond, down to the nature preserve portion of the garden before circling back up toward the center of the garden. As the tour concluded, members could smell the fresh barbeque that was delivered by CFPACS President Dave Hall. The hungry group grabbed their refreshments and conversed at the nearby picnic tables.

Once everyone had enough to eat, it was time for the auction to begin. Some of our new faces were eager to bid on palms that were long sought after, but rarely available in their locales. After the auction was held, our vendors had the opportunity to showcase their wares and lighten their load for the trip home.

The meeting concluded with each attendee taking a turn loading their vehicle full of new plants to add to their already packed gardens and any leftovers they desired from the barbeque. It was the perfect closing to 2024. We look forward to seeing everyone at our sales and our meetings next year!

