

GROWING
Cycas multipinnata* x *Cycas debaoensis
IN PALM BEACH COUNTY

Submitted by Charlie Beck

I am not usually a fan of hybrid plants. I usually prefer to plant true species, but a few years ago I was lucky enough to obtain a cycad labeled *Cycas multipinnata* at our meeting auction. I was told that the mother plant was a true *C. multipinnata* but it might have cross pollinated with a *C. debaoensis*. Seed was produced at the Holton Nursery. Both *C. multipinnata* and *C. debaoensis* are closely related cycads which are native to China. Both display unique bipinnate leaf structure and both grow on limestone soil.

Well, this plant is definitely not a true species because it holds many more leaves than a true *C. multipinnata* which usually only holds one or two leaves. Both of these species are rare in habitat. *C. multipinnata* is reported to be near extinction and only an estimated 2,000 plants of *C. debaoensis* remain in the wild. If you like the look of this hybrid, they are still available for sale. I personally think it's more attractive than either of its parents. Our specimen is planted in highly alkaline shell rock which was brought in to provide a pad for our home. If you don't have an alkaline soil, I recommend yearly applications of dolomitic lime or amending the soil with pea gravel.

***Cycas multipinnata* hybrid**



Cycas multipinnata hybrid



leaf detail

***Cycas debaoensis* (Probable pollen donor)**

