



# Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society

*Affiliate of the International Palm Society*

Monthly Update

March 2010

## FEATURED THIS MONTH: *Zamia soconucensis*



*Zamia soconucensis*



*Zamia soconucensis* cone  
(Photo by Dale Holton)

FRONT COVER: *Zamia soconucensis* leaf.

(Photo by Dale Holton)

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**Featured this month: *Zamia soconucensis***

by Dale Holton

This *Zamia* is named for the locality in which it grows, the Sierra De Soconusco Mountains of Chiapas, Mexico. It is found in altitudes of 3,400 to 4,600 feet, where it gets rainfall in excess of 79 inches annually. It is an understory plant and grows mostly in organic clay soils. It is quite rare in cultivation and possibly endangered in habitat.

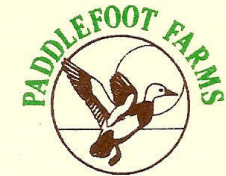
The Mexican government, in an effort to help protect these plants, encouraged the local inhabitants to propagate these plants so that they could sell seedlings and have some income for their efforts. But they never finished the process, so if you did buy some plants from them, you cannot get a permit from the Mexican government to export them. Sounds sort of like the way our government works.

I purchased my first plants as two leaf seedlings back in the mid 1990's. The plants grow quite fast and I believe that they are very orna-

mental and would make great landscape plants. Of the eight plants that I originally purchased, all were males. I eventually purchased two female plants in hopes of producing more plants. Unfortunately, these two plants did not cone for several years. Two years ago one of them coned and I produced 60 seedlings from two cones. I don't think anyone else has been able to get more than 3-6 plants from their efforts. This winter I have pollinated eight cones on three female plants.

These *Zamias* can grow to be five feet tall with light green leaves. They don't like freezing temperatures and will drop leaves when exposed to low temperatures, but they grow new leaves when the temperatures warm up. They like to be watered, but seem to do ok when kept on the dry side. I usually fertilize my plants four times a year with palm fertilizer.

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*Allagoptera caudescens*  
by Charlie Beck

I first saw *Allagoptera* (formerly *Polyandrococos*) *caudescens* while touring Dale Holton's garden. I came upon this unique palm and it stopped me in my tracks. The top side of the frond looked like a dark green coconut leaf but the underside of the leaf was as white as any *Astrocaryum* or *Cryosophila*. Dale informed me it was then known as *Polyandrococos caudescens* and was native to Brazil. *Polyandrococos* was a monotypic genus but was combined with *Allagoptera*. *Allagoptera* is closely related to *Attalea*, *Lytocaryum*, and *Syagrus*. *Allagoptera caudescens* is a monoecious palm with a solitary stem usually 12 to 24 feet tall in habitat, but the stem can also be short or subterranean. The fronds are pinnate with an extremely short peti-

ole. These palms are native to lowland tropical rainforest along the coast of Brazil at elevation of up to 1,000 feet. They are reported to persist in cleared areas which indicate they will tolerate full sun exposure.

I have three specimens planted in the shade in an area which is prone to flooding during heavy rain. Dale Holton and Ruth Sallenbach also have their palms planted in the shade. My palms are 16 years old and the largest has an overall height of 11 feet with 18 inches of trunk measuring 10 inches in diameter. These palms are not fast growing.

Some of the reference books indicate they are not cold hardy, but as you can see from the photos, no cold damage is apparent after our 2010 extended cold winter. Another

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GROWING CONDITIONS IN OUR GARDEN FOR <i>Allagoptera caudescens</i>	
Location	4 miles from ocean in suburban Lantana
Soil	Sand over a layer of hardpan (pineland flatwood habitat)
Irrigation	¾ inch applied twice a week
Flooding	Periodic inundation in sandy soil acceptable
Fertilization	3 times a year with Palm special analysis
Light	Shade
Micronutrient Deficiencies	None observed
Insect Damage	None observed
Hurricane Resistance	Excellent

VIRTUAL TOUR OF THE HOLTON GARDEN  
by Brenda Beck

On February 3, 2010, Dale Holton was the guest speaker at our general membership meeting. Dale, who retired in 1989, began planting his spectacular garden in 1991. He now has approximately 137 species/varieties of cycads and 166 species/varieties of palms

Dale's slide show presentation included photographs of many of the palms and cycads he has growing in his 1 ½ acre garden. If you were unable to attend this meeting, you missed out on a wonderful opportunity to see magnificent examples of the following plants beautifully placed in the landscape:

**CYCADS**

- *Ceratozamia hildae*
- *Cycas cairnsiana*
- *Cycas rumphii*
- *Dioon angustifolium*
- *Encephalartos concinnus*
- *Encephalartos ferox (female)*
- *Encephalartos hildebrandtii*
- *Encephalartos ituriensis*
- *Encephalartos longifolius*
- *Encephalartos munchii*

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interesting feature of this palm is that it traps leaf litter in its crown (see photo on page 11).

*Allagoptera caudescens* is not an easy palm to find but some local vendors do offer it for sale. Grow

- *Encephalartos trispinosus*
- *Encephalartos whitelockii*
- *Lepidozamia hopei*
- *Macrozamia communis*
- *Zamia amblyphyllidia*
- *Zamia intermis*
- *Zamia oblique*
- *Zamia pseudoparasitica*
- *Zamia pumila*
- *Zamia purpurea*
- *Zamia soconuscensis*
- *Zamia tuerckheimii*
- *Zamia vazquezii*

**PALMS**

- *Acrocomia (Gastrococos) crispa*
- *Arenga hookeriana*
- *Beccariophoenix sp.*
- *Bentinchia nicobarica*
- *Borassus aethiopum*
- *Borassus madagascariensis*
- *Calyptrocalyx hollrungii*
- *Carpoxydon macrospermum*
- *Chambeyronia macrocarpa var. hookeri*

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this palm for its unique form, manageable size, and vividly contrasting foliage. You might even try this palm in full sun as Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden's website recommends.

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# This Month's "Thank You"

## General Membership Meeting Refreshments

Cathy Burger	Kitty Philips
Susan Cioci	Tom Ramiccio
John Irvine	Ruth Sallenbach
Ruth Lynch	Mary Jaret Whisler

## Plant Donations

Dale Holton

## Special Thanks

to

**Brenda Skaggs**

for arriving at 5:00 p.m. to keep the Mounts building open for us.

Winner of the January 6th Name Drawing Prize  
was **Wes Taylor**  
who was not present. He missed out on receiving a copy of  
Betrock's Cold Hardy Palms by Alan W. Meerow.

## PLACE YOUR

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# UPCOMING MEETINGS

## GENERAL MEETING

**Date:** Wednesday, February 3, 2010  
**Time:** 7:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Mounts Botanical Garden  
**Subject:** RX for Cold-Damaged Palms  
**Speaker:** David McLean

## EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

**Date:** Wednesday, February 24, 2010  
**Time:** 7:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Ruth Sallenbach's Home  
6285 S. Military Trail, Lake Worth  
(561) 965-5430

## HOLTON NURSERY

PALMS and CYCADS

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Lake Worth, FL 33467  
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Mike Harris  
1584 F Road  
Loxahatchee, FL 33470

Phone: (561) 792-0333  
E-mail: palmz@gate.net

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- *Coccothrinax borhidiana*
- *Coccothrinax montana*
- *Colpotherinax wrightii*
- *Copernicia baileyana*
- *Copernicia cowellii*
- *Copernicia curtisii*
- *Copernicia. macroglossa*
- *Dictyosperma album* var. *furfuracea*
- *Dypsis lanceolata*
- *Hyophorbe verschaffeltii*
- *Hyophorbe. lagenicaulis*
- *Itaya amicornum*
- *Licuala radula*
- *Pseudophoenix sargentii*
- *Pseudophoenix sargentii* var. *navassana*
- *Pseudophoenix vinifera*
- *Raphia farinifera*
- *Sabal* sp. (riverside)
- *Satakentia liukuensis*
- *Schippia concolor*
- *Syagrus schizophylla*
- *Thrinax excelsa*

In addition, Dale shared slides showing gorgeous orchids dispersed throughout his garden beautifully displayed and growing on palms and other trees in the garden.

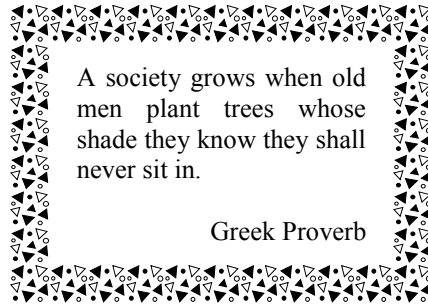
Unlike most palm and cycad enthusiasts who state that every plant is one of their favorites, Dale shared that his favorite palms include *Schippia concolor*, *Copernicia curtisii*, *Satakentia liukuensis*, and the unusual *Gaussia gomez-pompei*, and that one of his favorite



***Gaussia gomez-pompei***  
(Photo by Dale Holton)

cycads is *Zamia soconucensis* (featured this month).

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A society grows when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.

Greek Proverb



16 year-old *Allagoptera caudescens* planted in the Beck garden.

(Photo by Charlie Beck)

***Please share your garden experiences.  
Submit your stories and photos to [beck4212@aol.com](mailto:beck4212@aol.com)***



**ABOVE:** Comparison of top and underside of *Allagoptera caudescens* leaf  
**BELOW:** Leaf litter in *Allagoptera caudescens* crown

*(Photos by Charlie Beck)*



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Orchids displayed on a palm trunk in the Holton garden.  
*(Photo by Dale Holton)*

