



Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society

Affiliate of the International Palm Society

Monthly Update

May 2013

FEATURED THIS MONTH: *Copernicia ekmanii*



Copernicia ekmanii in the Beck garden (12 years old).

FRONT COVER: *Copernicia ekmanii* at Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden.

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Ruth Lynch, Refreshment Chairman
Brenda Beck, Web Master and Historian

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FEATURED THIS MONTH: *Copernicia ekmanii*

by Charlie Beck

Copernicia ekmanii is endemic to the north coast of Haiti. This species is presently on the IUCN red list of endangered plants. There are only an estimated 1,200 plants left in the wild. In habitat it grows in lowland scrub on rocky shores near the sea. It grows in a plant community comprising of cacti, bunch grass, and thorn scrub. Its habitat is so harsh there is little chance of loss due to conversion to agriculture. Local people do threaten the remaining plants by collection of leaves for thatch and harvest of stems for construction.

Copernicia ekmanii is a medium sized fan palm with silver leaves. In habitat maximum stem height is 15' but cultivated plants can reach heights of 30'. The leaves are waxy and are well adapted to high winds. On sizable specimens a skirt of old leaves form to add appeal of this palm. The *large C. ekmanii* at Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden (FTBG) withstood the category 5 winds of Hurricane Andrew in 1992.

For years a single specimen was grown at FTBG. It regularly produced crops of non-viable seeds. *C. ekmanii* was not available for sale at any of the Palm Society sales. Viable seeds became available prior to 2000 from a source in the Florida Keys. I planted out our single specimen in 2001. It grows without any supplemental irrigation on a mound of hardpan soil which was dug up to

allow installation of a septic drain field. Although there have been reports of cold sensitivity in areas more than 5 miles inland our specimen was not damaged by the record cold 2009-2010 winters. I have seen beautiful specimens at Mike Harris' garden in Cooper City, FL and also at the Eigelberger's estate, Casa Phippsberger, in Palm Beach. I would not recommend planting this species west of Military Trail due to its cold sensitivity.

Our specimen is growing a little slower than most other *Copernicia* species. In 12 years it has grown to an overall height of 7'. The leaves are quite showy with their silver color and their armed petioles. This is a very distinctive palm which would never be confused with any of the other common silver leaved palms. With a little more height I hope the petticoat of old leaves will soon form. When they form, the inflorescences will extend beyond the crown of leaves.

I am told that Caribbean Palm Nursery (see ad on page 5) offers this rare species for sale. I encourage all members east of Military Trail to consider growing this beautiful and rare palm. We are lucky to have this palm, which was sought after for so many years, now available for sale. Every *C. ekmanii* grown in South Florida helps continued survival of this endangered palm.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

May 1, 2013

6:30 p.m. - Board Meeting
 7:30 p.m. General Membership Meeting
 Internet Tour of the Garden of
 Jeff & Suchin Marcus, Parts III & IV
 See you at Mounts Botanical Garden!

This Months Featured Auction Plants

Pinanga copelandii
Pritchardia beccariana
Dypsis utilis
Kentiopsis oliviformis

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Janice Dipaolo
 David Hutchins

Linda Walker
 Diana Wise

APRIL THANK YOU

Food: Don Bittel, Steve Garland, Jeff Hutchinson,
 Joe Libertucci, Sue Pepler, Tom Ramiccio, Jim Shields,
 Ron & Kathy Silverio, Angela Valero

Plant Donations: Betty Alhborn, Charlie Beck, Steve Garland, Mike Harris,
 Dale Holton

Book Donations: Paul Craft


Door: Betty Ahlborn



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"By appointment only"

Mike Harris Garden in Cooper City

by Charlie Beck

Earlier this year the South Florida Palm Society sponsored a tour of Mike Harris' garden in Cooper City. Mike has graciously agreed to host this year's Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society Picnic in this fabulous garden. This is a large garden with a great collection of palms, cycads, and ornamental plants. This is probably the most diverse collection of mature Madagascar palms in South Florida. I guarantee you that you will discover many new palms. I included a few photos of Mike's gems in this newsletter. Unfortunately the pictures are in black and white due to budgetary constraints, so attend our picnic and see these and many more palms and cycads in full living color.



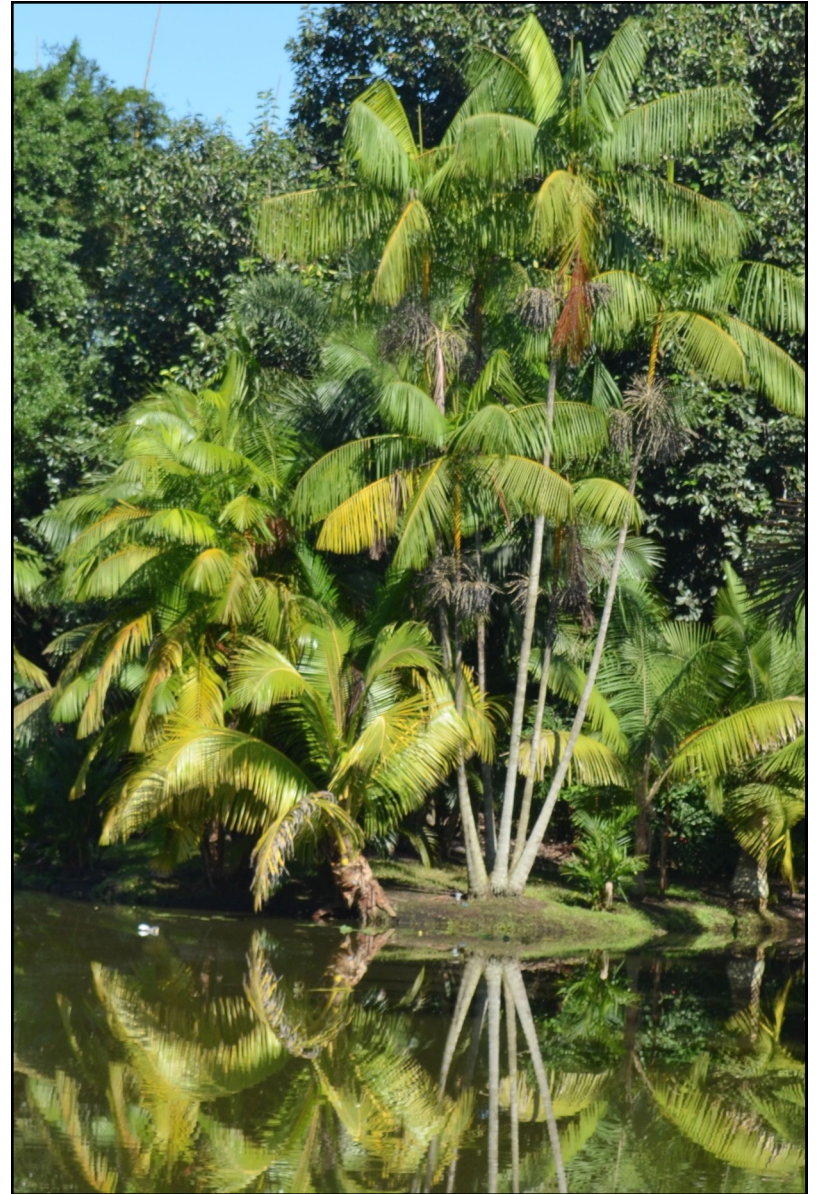
Pelagodoxa henryana
 in the Harris garden.



Syagrus coronata in the Harris garden.



Dypsis florencei in the Harris garden.



Oncosperma sp. in the Harris garden.



Copernicia ekmanii in the Harris garden.

All photographs included in this issue were provided by Charlie Beck.



Ravenea xerophila in the Harris garden.



Dypsis onilahensis in the Harris garden - notice extremely white crownshaft.



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Chamaedorea adscendens
inflorescence

