



Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society

Affiliate of the International Palm Society

Monthly Update

November 2017

“THANK YOU”

Door: Angie Peacock & Don Bittel

Auction: Don Bittel & Terry Lynch

NOVEMBER AUCTION PLANTS

Dypsis ampasindavae
Dypsis basilonga
Dypsis prestoniana
Itaya amicornum
Pritchardia beccariana

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UPCOMING MEETING

November 1, 2017

Meeting Time: 7:30 p.m.

At Mounts Botanical Garden

Speaker: Robin Crawford

Subject: Palm Exploration in Cuba

VISIT US AT

www.palmbeachpalmcycadsociety.com

All photographs in this issue were provided by Charlie Beck unless otherwise specified.

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2017 Holiday Give Away Palms



Beccariophoenix madagascariensis

photos courtesy of Palmpedia.net

Similar to *B. fenestralis* but without windows in leaves when small. I have found it's slower growing than *B. fenestralis*, but the showy infructescence is worth the wait. Similar overall scale as the Coconut Palm

Allooptera caudescens (formally *Polyandrococos caudescens*)

Great choice for Palm Beach County gardens. Fronds are dark green above and silver below. It is a medium sided palm for a moist shady location. The fronds form an upright chalice which traps leaf litter. Once stem forms its growth rate slows, so it will never grow too large.



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2017 Holiday Give Away Palms



Archontophoenix purpurea

Medium sized palm with a showy purple crownshaft.
Adaptable to full or partial exposure to the sun.



Burretiokentia vieillardii

This is a small palm, similar in size to *Burretiokentia hapala*.
Slower growing than *B. hapala*.
The showy brown crownshaft is sometimes striped.
Photos taken in habitat, New Caledonia



Calyptrocalyx hollrungii

The best of all of the genus for Palm Beach County gardens.
Fronds emerge pink. Plant in a moist shaded location.



Caryota obtusa
(formerly *C. gigas*)

Showy, large fish-tail leaves. A large monotypic palm which blooms at end of life.



Chamaedorea arenbergiana

Rarely available palm with wide leaflets which have long drip tips. This palm has a showy infructescence with tightly packed seeds. This is a small palm best planted in a moist shaded location.

2017 Holiday Give Away Palms



Chamaedorea ernesti-augusti

This is a small, solitary palm, native to Central America. It has simple, bifid green leaves which are much larger than *C. metallica*. These palms grow well in a moist shady situation. As with all palms with slender stems, they should not be planted under palms which drop heavy fronds. They are best situated under woody trees or palms with light fronds.



Dypsis carlsmithii
10 years old in Beck Garden

Dypsis robusta

This palm was described from a specimen growing at Floribunda Palms & Exotics Nursery in Hawaii. It is reported to be a large palm when grown in Hawaii but to my knowledge it has not been tested in Palm Beach County. The immature leaves are very attractive. The leaflets are wide and recurved, similar to *D. prestoniana*, but mature fronds look quite different. The specimen in our garden has shown evidence of boron deficiency, so keep an eye out for that. We planted ours in full sun but I think it would look better in the shade. From descriptions, *D. robusta* is a canopy palm which will eventually grow to a full sun exposure.



Dypsis carlsmithii

This species has been a challenge for me. The first few plantings were unsuccessful. Ten years ago I planted one which is now growing vigorously. If you look at photos of this palm, taken in its native habitat, you will see a very interesting swollen crownshaft. I have not yet seen this feature develop on Florida grown palms. With time it should develop.



Dypsis carlsmithii in habitat
"Photo by Oliver Reilhes"
Courtesy of Palmpedia.net

2017 Holiday Give Away Palms



Dypsis ampasindavae

This palm has a lot of visual appeal. We planted one many years ago and it grew vigorously. It had a beautiful crown and an attractive green ringed stem. When it reached an overall height of 8' it mysteriously died. I'm sure it was boron deficiency, because I have noticed B deficiency on some of the potted plants at palm nurseries. Not all palms develop this deficiency, so don't hesitate planting it. It's easy to cure with an application of Borax. Palms with B deficiency have corrugations in emerging fronds. I know when you see this palm's beauty you'll want one for your garden.



Dypsis sp. "Mayotte Island"
(left and right)

This palm is a sparse clumper. Our 17 year old specimens have only produced one small offshoot, so this palm takes little space in the garden. It has upright pinnate fronds and an attractive waxy stem. After 17 years our tallest specimen has an overall height of 12'. It has never been affected by low temperatures and never developed any nutritional deficiencies. Our palms are shade grown, but it might acclimate to more sunlight.



2017 Holiday Give Away Palms

Kentiopsis oliviformis (right)

K. oliviformis is a canopy palm from New Caledonia. This is a medium size pinnate palm with a crown of upright, 'feather duster' leaves. They can be grown in sun or shade. Being a canopy palm, it will outgrow any shade tree that you plant it under. *K. oliviformis* is absolutely one of the best palms for Palm Beach County. We have nine specimen palms in our garden dating back to 1997. They were unaffected by three hurricanes and were also not fazed by the record cold winters of 2009 and 2010. I could not give them a higher recommendation. An occasional application of magnesium sulfate is helpful.



Kerriodoxa elegans

K. elegans is a stunningly beautiful palm endemic to Thailand. It has large palmate leaves displayed on purple to black petioles. The leaf underside is white. When well grown their beauty is unrivaled. Their footprint is large and vertical growth is slow. Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden has some mature fruiting specimens which



you have probably admired. Those palms survived Hurricane Andrew. Growing *Kerriodoxa* is like growing *Copernicia* species. Some palms grow well and some palms seem to never grow. Runts are common in both of these genera. I have applied both boron and magnesium to correct deficiencies yet still the runts won't grow. We have six *K. elegans* planted in our garden. None of our plants were affected by the 2009-2010 winter temperatures.

2017 Holiday Give Away Palms



Hyophorbe indica

A proven performer in Palm Beach County. This is a medium sized palm with a green crownshaft and attractive inflorescences



Pinanga philippinensis photo by Paul Craft
Courtesy of Palmpedia.net

This is a thin stemmed clumping palm with fine leaflets. Rarely seen in Palm Beach County.



Pritchardia hillebrandii

A showy fan palm which is rarely seen in Palm Beach County. This is a medium sized palm with stiff fronds. Plant it in full or partial exposure to the sun.



Ravenea sambiranensis

Photo by Cindy Adair
Courtesy of Palmpedia.net

One of the rarely seen *Ravenea* species that thrives in Palm Beach County sandy soil. Medium sized with distinctive curled leaf tips.



Syagrus sancona

This is the South American Foxtail Palm. It is cold hearty, wind resistant and will grow without supplemental irrigation once established - a great palm for Palm Beach County.

Aftermath of Hurricane Irma
by Charlie Beck

I will share some of my friend's experiences as well as mine. Unless you live through a hurricane of Irma's magnitude, it's hard to imagine some of the challenges that you face.



Arenga westerhoutii
4" thick mat of fiber surrounds stem



Arenga westerhoutii
Fallen stem encircled with long sharp spines

Hurricane Irma was a category 5 hurricane with 185 mph sustained wind speed when headed to South Florida. At one point the radar tracker map showed the predicted path through Palm Beach County (PBC), traveling north along Military Trail, ¼ mile west of our garden. As the hurricane tracked through the Caribbean, winds speeds were at record high levels. Hurricane Irma reached the southern tip of Florida and veered west, traveling north along Florida's west coast sparing PBC a direct hit.

I have a good friend who lives in Naples, FL. Hurricane Irma's eye passed directly over his home. Wind speed was measured at 145 mph as it passed through Naples. My friend's roof lost large sections of shingles but no structural damage was apparent. A Live Oak tree was downed in his back yard (removal cost \$4000). He told me that most of the palms in his neighborhood lost all of their fronds, but stems remained standing. This included a large *Roystonea oleracea* located in his front yard. At that time, the only downed palm that he reported was a native *Sabal palmetto*. A grouping of small *Bismarckia nobilis* planted at his neighborhood entrance survived the high winds with fronds shredded but intact.

My friend was prepared for the storm. He had a full complement of hurricane supplies including food, water, generator, gasoline and tarps for any possible roof damage. A lesson learned from his experience is that you also need 1X2" wood strips and appropriate nails to secure tarps on the roof. These are items we should add to our hurricane supplies long before the hurricane approaches because they are in short supply after the storm.

Electrical power was lost for many days. Gasoline was in short supply and long lines formed at any operating gas station. Generators use a lot of gas, so you have to continually replenish your supply. My friend's generator used over 100 gallons of gas during

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"By appointment only"



Cryosophila sp.
Crown of fronds removed by the storm



Cryosophila sp.
One week after storm new fronds emerge.
This has occurred after each of the past four hurricanes.

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the outage. Even though there was a nighttime curfew in place, my friend ventured out at 2-3AM in search of gasoline.

Luckily, city water flowed after the storm, but sewage pumping stations were without power. Authorities warned residents not to use toilets or drain pipes because sewage was backing up in the drainage system. There was danger of backflow into homes. Any use of water had to drain outside, not down drains. My friend helped his neighbors by removing drain, vent plugs in their front yards. Some of these opened vents produced a flow of sewage onto the front lawns. The issue worsened as some communities regained power prior to power restoration at the sewage pumping stations. People started using their water supply as normal. The city officials threatened to shut off the water supply if people didn't stop using their water drains.

As reported in the Palm Beach Post, a total of 12 tornado warnings were issued in Palm Beach County during Hurricane Irma. These tornadoes are shallow rotating thunderstorms which move very fast. According to the National Weather Service Post Storm Hurricane Irma Report, Melbourne FL, eight tornadoes were confirmed on the Space Coast. Tornadoes were also confirmed in Broward and Dade Counties. I have not yet seen tornado confirmation reports in PBC but that doesn't mean they didn't occur.

Venturing out in our garden after the storm, I was surprised at all of the damage. Damage was worse than the three hurricanes we weathered in 2004 & 2005. We had dozens of woody trees either snapped off 20' high or completely uprooted. Our tall Ylang Ylang Tree was snapped in half and landed on our 12X20' storage shed. Limbs pierced the shed's roof. My neighbor also had quite a bit of damage and he theorized that a twister formed on his property and continued across our garden. Upon inspection, you could see a definite path of destruction. The south side of our garden had minor damage but central and northern areas were much worse. Luckily, our home's roof stayed intact but joint compound was shaken loose from our ceiling, so there was some flexing of the roof structure.

I was disappointed in the wind resistance of many of our native, woody trees. I assume that they have evolved to break away rather than uproot. The only native tree to uproot was the Lancewood. Old Slash Pines & Live Oaks withstood the wind with minor damage, but many other natives were badly damaged.

Non-native woody trees were even worse than the natives. Most non-native, woody trees were damaged. Many canopies were twisted off or trunks were blown sideways. Some of them were uprooted. Even the huge Baobab with a base measuring 6' in diameter is now leaning over.

The good news is that many palms survived with only frond damage with stems left standing. These palms were either wind resistant or they were not in the twister's path of assault. In the 2004-2005 hurricanes, half of our *Roystonea oleracea* were uprooted. The surviving *R. oleracea* weathered this storm with only leaf loss. This suggests that wind resistance is variable, even within a given species.

We learned in 2004 that resetting fallen palms was not worth the cost. Many of the reset palms died anyway. We also learned that fallen palms can continue to live if left in place on the ground. The buds turn skyward and they continue to grow. We have a few palms which

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Caryota no

Section through woody peduncle
(lower unbranched part of an inflorescence) measures 14" across

are quite healthy with 20' stems laying on the ground. As long as they don't block pathways we leave them in place.

We did lose some huge palms. Monocarpic palms, *Arenga westerhoutii* and *Caryota no* were in full bloom so ultimately their days were numbered. Both went down in the storm. These palms are much larger on the ground than they seem when 40' in the air. The Giant Fishtail Palm, *Caryota no*, is aptly named and *Arenga westerhoutii* rivals *A. pinnata* in size. All parts of these palms are very heavy. They are not easy to chainsaw because of the fiber present at the leafbases or encircling the stems. The fiber instantly jams chainsaws and it must be removed prior to cutting the stem. *A. westerhoutii* also

has sharp 3' long spines protruding from the stem. They must to be removed with lopping shears prior to fiber removal. After all of accessible fronds were cut away, my first cut through the *A. westerhoutii* stem took 2 hours. The mat of fiber is 4" thick and is very resistant to shearing or cutting. I attacked it with sharpened lopping shears, hand shears, pruning saw, machete, and serrated knives before I finally tried using a very sharp long handled axe. I found this was the best method for cutting the thick mat of fiber. This works for the fiber on the top of the stem, but it's hard to attack the fiber on the stem sides with a long handled axe. For that I found a short handled axe was the best tool to use. Portions of the stem not located in pathways will be left to rot away over time. Cut stems are incredibly heavy.

Some stems are very rot resistant. An *Arenga pinnata* that uprooted in 2004 still has its lowest portion of stem laying on the ground. It's still solid as ever and will probably still be there another 13 years from now.

The most dramatic event during the storm was damage to several *Bismarckia nobilis*. Our tallest specimen, 65' tall in overall height, was twisted off 20' above the ground. It crushed the crown of our magnificent *Mauritia flexuosa*. Even though the *Mauritia* was planted below ground level, I don't think it will survive. Another 60' tall Bismarck Palm was leaning over pointing toward the 40' high power line. It looked like the palm would have to be removed in sections from the top down. Chain sawing at ground level would likely bring down the electric lines. The exposed root ball of this leaning palm broke a 2" irrigation line. While running our 5hp irrigation pump trying to locate the leak, the ground quickly flooded at a rate of 100 gallons a minute. This flooding caused the palm to fall. I retreated to safe distance and watched the palm fall into the electric lines. The canopy hit all three lines on the pole. Each wire bent like a slingshot but none broke. That palm's stem is 3' in diameter at ground level. Needless to say Bismarck Palm stems are incredibly heavy. Stems have a 1" thick, hard outer shell encircling inner fiber. All of the stem strength comes from that outer shell. I noticed another Bismarck Palm close by, that had a 20' long vertical split in the stem which oozed sap. I'm sure this seriously limits the strength of that stem.

The Bismarck Palms that we lost were planted in 1993. They were among the tallest palms in our garden. Bismarck Palms were relatively new to South Florida in the late 1980's. There was little written about them at that time, but I did find one description that stated that they could grow 100' tall. In 1886 a plant explorer with the last name Stein reported seeing 165' tall Bismarck Palms in Madagascar. This height has been discounted as an exaggeration by Dr. John Dransfield in his book, Palms of Madagascar. That book states the stems max out at 65' tall and measure up to 1.3' in diameter. I assume they grow much larger in cultivation. The takeaway here should

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Bismarckia nobilis
 Damaged stem with long vertical separation



Bismarckia nobilis
 Section through stem showing 1" thick, hard outer shell

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be that Bismarck Palms are very large and might not be the most wind resistant palms. Use caution when planting close to your home.

Surprisingly, our largest *Corypha umbraculifera* specimens stood strong. I was concerned that the huge fronds would catch the wind and topple the stem. The fronds were completely shredded but the stems were left standing. Leaf shredding also occurred on our three tall *Borassus aethiopum*. I believe they survived the high winds because they were spaced 20' apart and they lent support to each other.

Our tall *Attalea cohune* and *A. butyracea* suffered a lot of wind damage but the stems stood strong. Many of the fronds were released. I found a spear leaf laying on the ground - hopefully the bud is intact. Our stemless *Attalea speciosa* with 27' long fronds was flattened by the wind. *Attalea crassispatha* took a direct hit but survived the storm. Like many other palms in the garden, many of the older healthy green fronds quickly turned brown weeks after the storm. These brown fronds form a skirt around the stem even though they are usually self-cleaning.

We have a single *Cryosophila sp.* that released its whole crown of fronds during the storm. This also happened during the hurricanes in 2004 & 2005. A week later it started pushing out new fronds. I'm sure it will be fully recovered in six months.

Luckily, all of our large *Copernicia sp.* are still standing. The fronds are shredded but the buds appear undamaged. The only *Dypsis* species badly damaged were *D. cabadae* and *D. prestoniana*. A few *D. cabadae* stems were twisted off. A stemless *D. prestoniana* was flattened.

The "wind resistance winner" this time was *Veitchia arecina*. (Former species *V. macdanielsii* and *V. montgomeryana* have been lumped into *V. arecina*.) Our specimens released many of their fronds and quickly began their recovery. These palms are well adapted to our growing conditions in PBC and should be more widely planted.

Past "wind resistance winner" *Satakenia liukuensis* lost its title this time because our tallest specimen leaned over after this storm. All of our other specimens looked unaffected by the high winds, so it still receives a high grade.

I was surprised how well all of our *Pritchardia sp.* weathered the storm. They were relatively unaffected by the high winds. All of our *Phoenix sp.* seemed unaffected except *P. dac-*

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Bismarckia nobilis
Uprooted root ball with yard stick

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tylifera was leaned over by the high winds. It was in the path of the highest winds.

Palm genera that weathered the storm without apparent damage to the stem:

(These palms are over 20' tall in overall height and might not have been exposed to the highest force winds.)

Acoelorrhaphe, Acrocomia, Archontophoenix, Areca, Beccariophoenix, Bentinckia, Borassus, Calyptronoma, Carpentaria, Chambeyronia, Coccothrinax, Copernicia, Corypha, Cryosophila, Dictyosperma, Elaeis, Heterospatha, Hyphaene, Kentiopsis, Livistona, Neoveitchia, Normanbya, Pritchardia, Pseudophoenix, Ptychosperma, Raphia, Roystonea, Sabal, Saribus, Syagrus, Thrinax, Veitchia, Washingtonia, Wodyetia, Zombia

Palm genera with individual specimens which were snapped off or uprooted:

(These palms were over 20' in overall height.)

Aiphanes, Arenga, Attalea (stemless), Bactris, Bismarckia, Caryota, Cocos, Dypsis, Gaussia

Native trees that were damaged:

Lancewood (uprooted), Jamaica Caper, Gumbo Limbo, Soldierwood, Paradise Tree, Ironwood

Non-native plants that were damaged:

Baobab, Brazilian Rain Tree, Ylang Ylang Tree, Jackfruit, Jaboticaba, Bamboo, Orchid tree, Long John

Editor's Note

Brenda and I will retire as editors of our society's newsletter at the end of 2017. I've always been interested in compiling a list our reader's favorite palms. We have the following three weeks to gather your thoughts, so we can share them in next month's newsletter. This survey is open to all of our readers - members and non-members. We would especially like to hear from our readers overseas.

I pose the following question:

If you could plant only a single species of palm around your home and your garden area was 2 acres in size, which palm would you plant?

Include reasoning if so desired, and/or a close second choice.

(Assume that you have the perfect climate and soil for growing your palm selection.)

Please email you're your response to the address shown below by November 20, 2017.
support@palmbeachpalmcycadsociety.com

Thanks,
Charlie Beck