



# Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society

*Affiliate of the International Palm Society*

Monthly Update

October 2010

## FEATURED THIS MONTH: *Zamia purpurea*



ABOVE: *Astrocaryum mexicanum* wide leaf variety growing in the Beck garden.

*(Photo by Charlie Beck)*

FRONT COVER: *Zamia purpurea* growing in the Holton garden.

*(Photo by Dale Holton)*

**Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society Officers**

Betty Ahlborn, President (561) 722-8106  
 Tom Ramiccio, First Vice President, Sales (561) 582-5915  
 Marshall Dewey, Second Vice President, Planting  
 Dale Holton, Third Vice President, Programs (561) 965-6792  
 Ruth Sallenbach, Secretary (561) 965-5430  
 Ingrid Dewey, Treasurer  
 Kitty Philips, Acting Membership Chairman  
 Brenda Beck, Editor & Historian (561) 963-5511

**Appointees**

Charles Beck, Librarian  
 Marty Dougherty, Web Master  
 Ruth Lynch, Refreshment Chairman (561) 312-5046  
 Kitty Philips & Susan Cioci, Activities & Events Coordinators

VISIT US AT [palmbeachpalmcycadsociety.com](http://palmbeachpalmcycadsociety.com)

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***Astrocaryum mexicanum***

By Charlie Beck

*Astrocaryum mexicanum* is a small solitary palm native to Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras. It grows to 20 feet tall. Typical habitat is moist lowland forest. It does not grow in areas that remain inundated. This palm is monoecious with inflorescences bearing male and female flowers. Fruit is eaten by rodents, monkeys, fish, and people. The stem can vary from one to three inches in

diameter. As with all *Astrocaryum*, the stems, fruit, and leaves are armed with sharp black flattened spines. *Astrocaryum* can be distinguished from the equally spiny genus of *Bactris* by the leaf underside – *Astrocaryum* is whitish, where *Bactris* is typically green. Juvenile leaves appear simple. As the palm matures, the simple leaves tend to split into uneven wide segments. There is a variety which displays mature leaves with evenly spaced, thin pinnea.

We have two *A. mexicanum* growing in our garden - one with wide leaf segments (see page 2) and one with thin pinnea (see page 10). Both specimens looked similar as young seedlings. If the variety with wide leaflets is pre-

*(Continued on page 10)*



Phone  
 (561) 722-8106  
 (561) 798-4562  
 BETTY AHLBORN

Exotic Palms  
 &  
 Tropicals

13823 Paddlefoot Lane  
 Loxahatchee, FL 33470

**GROWING CONDITIONS IN OUR GARDEN  
 FOR *Astrocaryum mexicanum***

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
Fertilization	3 times a year with Palm special analysis
Flooding	Periodic inundation in sandy soil acceptable
Light	Deep shade
Micronutrient Deficiencies	None observed
Insect Damage	None observed
Hurricane Resistance	Good



## FEATURED THIS MONTH: *Zamia purpurea*

by Dale Holton

*Zamia purpurea* is named for the color of the new emerging leaves. The species was discovered by John D. Rees in 1978, and named in 1983, by Andrew P. Vivoides and Mario Vazquez-Torres. The stems grow underground and the leaves can be three to five feet with spines on the leaf stem. There appears to be two varieties. The plants from Veracruz seem to be shorter growing, and are less corrugated than the plants from Oaxaca.

I have not been fortunate enough to encounter these plants in the wild - maybe someday in my next life. These plants are possibly the most attractive of the Mexican *Zamias*. The new leaves have a dark purplish color which can last for up to two months in cooler weather. They usually make new leaves one to two times a year. I have both varieties in my garden, and find them

vigorous growers. Unfortunately I have all males of the larger variety, and all females of the smaller variety. I pollinate them every year and raise a number of seedlings, which I seem to sell faster than I can produce them. I do have some trouble with damp-off when they are small and in pots. In the ground I do not have this problem. I think my growing mix stays too wet. I am now experimenting with a new potting medium and have had much better success. This species must be grown in the shade as they are understory plants in habitat.

Every exotic garden should have three or four of these plants. They are not readily available in nurseries or garden centers. When you can find them, expect to pay \$30 to \$40 for seedlings. (See photo on front cover)

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## Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society Election of Officers to Take Place at the October Meeting

Election of 2011 officers will take place on October 6th. While current board members will be included on the slate of possible board members for 2011, we look forward to those who can bring new ideas and skills to the Society to add their names to the proposed slate of officers. The floor will be open to nominations prior to the election, so anyone interested in running or nominating another

interested individual should not miss this meeting.

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**HOLTON NURSERY**  
PALMS and CYCADS

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Lake Worth, FL 33467  
Phone (561) 965-6792  
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"By appointment only"

## Loran Whitelock's Cycad Garden

by Brenda Beck

At the September 1<sup>st</sup> general meeting, we were treated to a presentation by Dale Holton on some of the exquisite cycads growing in Loran M. Whitelock's Cycad Gardens in Los Angeles, California. Mr. Whitelock has studied cycads for many years, began planting his own

garden 45 years ago, and is noted author of The Cycads. Mr. Whitelock gave Mr. Holton a private tour of this spectacular garden during his recent visit to California.

As you may guess, Mr. Whitelock's garden is full of many gorgeous cycads, including some very rare ones. We saw slides of the rare *Encephalartos hirsutus* and *E. cupidus*. The garden also includes a very old *Encephalartos aplanatus*. There were also beautiful specimens of *Ceratozamia eurphyllidia*, *Zamia inermis*, and a *Ceratozamia* "redback" unnamed species, as well as many other beautiful specimens. (See photos on page 11)



Loran Whitelock and Dale Holton  
in Cycad Gardens

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(561) 586-2332



**LAKE OSBORNE ANIMAL CLINIC**

JOHN T. LYNCH, D.V.M.

1502 Lake Osborne Dr.  
Lake Worth, FL 33461

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

# UPCOMING MEETINGS

## GENERAL MEETING

**Date:** Wednesday, October 6, 2010  
**Time:** 7:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Mounts Botanical Garden  
**Speaker:** Larry Noblick  
**Subject:** Palms & Cycads of the Marquesas Islands



## EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

**Date:** Wednesday, October 27, 2010  
**Time:** 7:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Ruth Sallenbach's Home  
6285 S. Military Trail, Lake Worth  
(561) 965-5430

### PLACE YOUR

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Palm Beach Palm  
& Cycad Society  
c/o Brenda Beck  
P.O. Box 21-2228

Royal Palm Beach, FL 33421  
(Check must be received prior to print.)

# THIS MONTH'S "THANK YOU"

## General Member Meeting Refreshments

Marshall & Ingrid Dewey  
Kitty Philips  
Tom Ramiccio  
Ruth Sallenbach  
Mary & Tom Whisler

## Plant Donations

Marshall Dewey  
Dale Holton



## Special Thanks

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

Winners of the September 1st Name Drawing Prize was  
**Roland Gordin**  
who received a M. Ensinosa numbered print  
of a *Pseudophoenix ekmanii*.

*Doyle Cochran missed out on receiving this prize  
because he was not present.*



**FALL SALE**  
**Saturday October 9th**  
**9am to 4pm**  
**Sunday October 10th**  
**9 am to 3pm**

**Palm & Cycad Sale**

**For More Info Call**  
**561-386-7812**

**FREE ADMISSION**

**Caloosa Park**

*Located in Boynton Beach - north of Atlantic Ave., and south of Woolbright Rd - on the east side of Congress Ave.*

**Over 500 Species OF PALMS & CYCADS - ALL SHAPES AND SIZES!**

**ALSO - Books, T-Shirts & Free Knowledgeable Advice.**

**Sponsored by: The Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society**

The Palm Beach Post

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

If you can spare a few hours to help out at the plant sale, please call Tom Ramiccio at the number listed above.

(Continued from page 4)

ferred, it is best to buy a larger palm displaying mature leaves.

Our thin leaf specimen was planted in the ground 13 years ago. Its stem is two inches in diameter and the overall height is nine feet. Our wide leaf specimen is 10 years old and has a three inch diameter stem and an eight foot overall height. The fronds of both varieties are five feet long.

*Astrocaryum mexicanum* is well adapted to growing in our sandy soils if regular irrigation is applied. It grows best in full shade but will grow in a semi-shaded location. With regular fertilization, I

have never noticed minor nutritional deficiencies. Our palms showed no cold damage after our most recent record cold winter.

Plant *A. mexicanum* where a small showy palm is required in a shady location. The wide leaf segment variety is unsurpassed in its tropical look. The thin leafy variety is also quite attractive. The showy white leaf underside and the jet black spines on the stems make this palm a real standout. *Astrocaryum mexicanum* is not a fast grower but is a reliable, steady grower well adapted to Palm Beach County.

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*Astrocaryum mexicanum* thin leaf variety growing in the Beck garden..  
 (Photo by Charlie Beck)

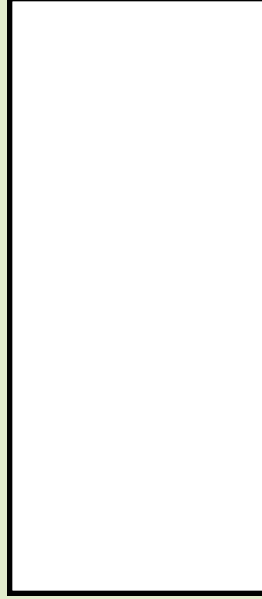




Loran Whitelock's Cycad Gardens in Los Angeles, California



Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society  
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*Astrocaryum mexicanum* spiny stem and infructescence