



FEATURED THIS MONTH: *Zamia pseudoparasitica*



Zamia pseudoparasitica growing in Holton garden.
(Photo by Dale Holton)



160' tall *Roystonea oleracea* growing in New Caledonia.
(Photo by Charlie Beck)

FRONT COVER: *Zamia pseudoparasitica* growing in habitat in Panama.
(Photo by Dale Holton)

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**Featured this Month: *Zamia pseudoparasitica*
by Dale Holton**

Zamia pseudoparasitica was first described in 1854, by James Yates. This is the only known epiphytic cycad. It grows only in the trees in a cloud forest on the Northern slope of the Cordillera Central, in Panama. This cycad is usually found 30 or more feet above ground amongst other epiphytic plants. The seeds are most likely dropped in or around Bromeliads by birds. No living plants have ever been found growing on the ground.

On a recent trip to the habitat of these plants, we traveled a new road which was being constructed through the mountains from San Jose to the Atlantic coast. On this road I saw a few of the plants high up in the trees. They were hard to spot since there are many other plants sharing the same trees.

This *Zamia* is not currently listed as endangered, but upon completion of the road, the forest will almost surely be cut down even though it is National Forest land. The locals scoffed at us when we suggested this would happen. However, in another National Forest that we visited earlier in the trip, trees had been removed and the land was being used as grazing land.

In a recent article in the Cycad Journal, a plant was documented that had a major root extending some thirty feet to the ground. This had never before been seen. Plants that are displaced and fall to the ground do not survive.



Zamia pseudoparasitica female cone in the Holton garden
(Photo by Dale Holton).

I personally didn't try to grow these *Zamias* for several years as I assumed it would be too difficult to keep alive. Then one day I saw that Jeff Marcus had seedlings for sale at a reasonable price, so I ordered some of them. When they arrived, they each had one leaf. I potted them in pure Perlite with some Nutricote in one gallon pots. Much to my surprise, they thrived. They do need some shade. The forest where they come from is quite dense and is engulfed in clouds much of the time. After I realized that I could grow

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UPCOMING MEETINGS

Date: Wednesday, May 2, 2012
Location: Mounts Botanical Garden
Time: 6:20 p.m.—Palm Society Board Meeting
Time: 7:30 p.m.—General Meeting
Speaker: Chip Jones
Subject: Part I—White Flies
Part II—Garden Essentials

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Benjamin Crosby
James Golden
Mike Klingensmith
Marsha & Mike Shalloway
Angela Valero
Andres Veas

THIS MONTH'S "THANK YOU"

AUCTION/PLANT DONATIONS

Charlie Beck
Dale Holton

MEETING REFRESHMENTS

Dale Holton
Tom Ramiccio

DOOR PRIZE WINNER

Ingrid Dewey won a Palm Society T-Shirt

SPECIAL THANKS

to

Tom Ramiccio & Roland Grondin

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

A Tale of Two Royals

by Charlie Beck

Twenty years ago I planted seeds of *Roystonea regia* and *Roystonea oleracea*. The *R. regia* seeds were collected from a mature specimen growing on Center Street in Jupiter and the *R. oleracea* were obtained from a Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society member who collected the seeds in Venezuela. Back then the *Roystonea* from Venezuela was named *R. venezuelana* but this palm has subsequently been lumped into *R. oleracea*. Both *R. regia* and *R. oleracea* seeds germinated readily and grew quickly in pots. A year later we purchased the land which was to become our palm and cycad garden. These Royal Palms were some of the first palms planted out in



Roystonea oleracea leaf dries before dropping

(Photo by Charlie Beck)

our garden in 1993. All of the *Roystonea* palms survived transplanting and grew vigorously.

Brenda and I attended the 1994 International Palm Society biennial tour of Venezuela. We saw large groups of *R. oleracea* growing naturally in swampy areas and also saw some massive specimens grown in

cultivation. My first impression was the *R. oleracea* was a much larger palm than *R. regia*. The stems were massive and noticeably larger than our native Royal. The fronds were not plumose like *R. regia*. The leaflets were arranged in two closely spaced planes. This arrangement of leaflets is the feature that distinguishes *R. oleracea* from the other Royal palms.

My second sighting of *R. oleracea* growing in the tropics was in New Caledonia. In 2000, the International Palm Society had their biennial meeting in Noumea, New Caledonia. We toured a field of *R. oleracea* planted many years ago. These specimens were 160 feet tall. We were told that these palms had

never weathered a hurricane and that was the reason for their great height. Unfortunately, we were also told that these palms were to be felled for a planned development of the property.

R. oleracea is native to Guadeloupe, Dominica, Martinique, Barba-

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dos, Trinidad, Tobago, Venezuela and Columbia. It occurs at sea level to an elevation of 5,200 feet. *R. oleracea* is the tallest of the Royals. In habitat the stems can grow 130 feet tall and 26 inches in diameter. The lower fronds usually are held above horizontal position. *R. oleracea* tend to drop old leaves that are dry. First the leaf turns brown and then the leaf sheath slowly peels from the crownshaft. This drying process greatly lessens the weight of a fallen leaf. Although some might find this drying leaf held to the crownshaft as unsightly, it greatly reduces damage to underplantings when the frond finally releases from the crownshaft.

Brenda and I have seen *R. regia* growing naturally in the Fakahatchee Strand located in Copeland, Florida. This is one of the few natural populations of *R. regia* in Florida. I recommend a trip to this location for any palm enthusiast. These palms are approximately 100 feet

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tall and they grow on raised mounds in the swamp. They share the canopy with Bald Cypress trees. It is truly an impressive sight.

Both *R. regia* and *R. oleracea* are massive, solitary palms with green crownshafts and pinnate leaves. *Roystonea* species are monoecious. Both palms grow naturally in wet habitat. Both are well adapted to Palm Beach County. With proper fertilization and irrigation, they do not show any nutritional deficiencies. Royal Palm bugs are reported to damage Royal Palms but I have never noticed any damage in our garden. When not properly fertilized I have noticed severe man-

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20 years from seed in Beck garden		
	<i>Roystonea oleracea</i>	<i>Roystonea regia</i>
Stem height (bottom of crownshaft)	32 feet	24 feet
Stem diameter (waist height)	26.5 inches	21.6 inches
Frond length	16 feet	19 feet
Crownshaft length	6.6 feet	7.3 feet
Crownshaft diameter	11.5 inches	17.5 inches
Frond weight	12.2 pounds	47 pounds

(*Zamia pseudoparasitica*

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these magnificent plants, I traded for a large male plant in a seven gallon pot. To my surprise it was potted in potting soil and seemed quite happy. I personally would not recommend this. I later acquired another large

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male plant that is potted in a large pot with a coarse orchid mix. Sometime after that I got another large pot containing a male and female plant in the same pot. I keep these plants out of doors year around and have not seen any damage in the winters. I do water these plants daily and have lost a few plants that I didn't keep moist. I have pollinated cones on this plant three times and never got viable seed. Last year I pollinated it again and now have a very large cone that I think will have viable seeds.

I keep all the plants that I have for sale in wooden baskets with a coarse orchid mix. These plants will die if allowed to dry out for extended periods. They also should be grown high enough that the leaves do not touch the ground. As the plants get larger, the leaves get longer and could easily reach six feet or more.

Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society Membership

Be sure to keep your membership up to date. It will insure that you receive all Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society communications. Annual membership is \$25 for an individual membership and \$35 for a dual membership (two people living at the same address) per year and membership runs from January 1 to December 31. Membership can be renewed by sending payments to the Society at P.O. Box 21-2228, Royal Palm Beach, FL 33421. Please go to www.palmbeachpalmcycadsociety.com to obtain our membership application.

Thank you for your support of the Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society. We hope to see you at all of our general meetings which take place on the first Wednesday of every month at Mounts Botanical Garden in West Palm Beach. Be sure to watch for information regarding our field trips, special activities, and palm and cycad shows and sales. If you have questions about membership, you can contact Tom Whisler, our Membership Chairman, at (561) 627-8328 or at whisler.tom@synthes.com

International Palm Society 2012 Biennial to Thailand

September 11—18

The biennial includes a visit to Bangkok and Chon Buri areas and visits to the Nong Nooch Botanical Garden, Khao Yai National Park, and Tub Larn National Park.

Optional Pre-Tour to Southern Thailand
Optional Post-Tour to Vietnam

For additional information, please visit
http://www.palms.org/biennial_2012.cfm

(Tale of Two Royals continued from page 7)
ganese deficiency on *R. regia* grown in commercial settings. This deficiency will pencil point the trunk and eventually will kill the palm if not corrected. I've never seen this condition on *R. oleracea* but I've never seen this palm planted in a commercial setting.

Both *R. regia* and *R. oleracea* display white flowers (only *R. altissima* have violet flowers and *R. borinquena* have yellow flowers.) Full sun is required for optimum growth.

From the original 12 *R. oleracea* we planted in our garden, only 60 percent of the palms survived the hurricanes of 2004 and 2005. We have a friend in Naples, Florida with a single specimen of *R. oleracea*. This palm took several direct hurricane hits over the years and is still thriving in his garden. All of our *R. regia* survived the 2004 and 2005 hurricane seasons with little damage. Even though first im-

pression of *R. oleracea* is that it is larger than *R. regia*, in our garden only the stems are of a greater diameter. Our *R. regia* has a longer crownshaft and leaves and *R. oleracea* is faster growing in our garden. In 20 years *R. oleracea* has grown 32 feet tall vs. 24 feet tall for *R. regia*. Both measurements are to the bottom of the crownshaft.

R. regia and *R. oleracea* have a distinctively different appearance. *R. oleracea* with its almost flat fronds is readily distinguishable from the plumose *R. regia*. *R. regia* has longer leaves and crownshaft. *R. oleracea* has a larger, faster growing stem. *R. regia* appears more hurricane resistant but the fallen fronds are much heavier and can damage underplantings.

I never take our Royals for granted. They are both majestic palms worth planting in Palm Beach County.



Skyline accented with twenty year old specimens of *Roystonea oleracea* (left) and *Roystonea regia* (right) growing in the Beck garden..

(Rooftop photo by Charlie Beck)



Roystonea oleracea with upright flatter leaves



Roystonea regia with plumose leaves



Natural grove of *Roystonea oleracea* in Venezuela
(All photos on this page provided by Charlie Beck)



Newly emerged male inflorescence of *Chamaedorea tepejilote* in the Beck garden.



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