



# Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society

*Affiliate of the International Palm Society*

Monthly Update

September 2012

## FEATURED THIS MONTH: *Zamia imperialis*



**ABOVE:** Chip Jones with *Zamia imperialis* growing in habitat in Panama.  
**BELOW:** Chip Jones, Tom Whistler, and Dale Holton with *Zamia imperialis* growing in habitat in Panama. (Photos by Dale Holton)



**FRONT COVER:** *Zamia imperialis* growing in the Holton Garden.  
(Photo by Dale Holton)

**Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society  
2012 Officers & Executive Committee**

Tom Ramiccio, President (561) 582-5915  
 Jeff Hutchinson, First Vice President, Sales  
 Don Bittel, Second Vice President, Planting  
 Dale Holton, Third Vice President, Programs (561) 965-6792  
 Ruth Lynch, Secretary (561) 312-5046  
 Ingrid Dewey, Treasurer  
 Tom Whisler, Membership Chairman (561) 627-8328  
 Charlie Beck, Editor (561) 963-5511  
 Betty Ahlborn, Immediate Past President

**Appointees**  
 Charlie Beck, Librarian  
 Ruth Lynch, Refreshment Chairman  
 Brenda Beck, Web Master and Historian  
 To Be Determined, Activities & Events Coordinators

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

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*Opinions expressed and products or recommendations published in this newsletter may not be the opinions or recommendations of the Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society or its board of directors.*

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

*Zamia imperialis* was just recently named in May of 2008. The authors are Alberto S. Taylor of Panama, Jody L. Haynes of Florida, and Greg Holtzman of Hawaii. This *Zamia* was previously lumped into a group of plicate leafed *Zamias* that was named *Zamia skinnerii* in 1851. The *Zamia skinnerii* complex has just recently been divided into four to five different species.

*Zamia imperialis* is found in Cocle Province of Panama. It occurs as understory plants in the forest, usually along stream banks, and frequently growing in red clay.

This is one of the trunking *Zamias*, with plicate leaves. The new leaves emerge as a reddish color and turn green at maturity. On a recent trip there, with Chip Jones, and Tom Whistler, I was able to see these plants in habitat. There are currently many plants in the forest. A new road was under construction over the mountains to the Atlantic coast. This area was all primary forest. This area is all national for-



est, but from what we saw of other national forests, the area will be clear cut when the road is finished. Most likely in the next ten years, if you were to drive over this road, you will see mostly grazing land, banana plantations, and coffee farms. We passed many Indian villages along the road. Most of them had large clearings for bananas.

I have been growing these *Zamias* for about ten years. So far I only have male plants and have not been able to propagate more. I still have a couple of plants that have not yet coned, so there is still hope for a female. These are quite spectacular when they have new emerging leaves, which happen about once a year. They do get our native scales, which need to be controlled. They also need to be planted in a shaded spot that is irrigated. These plants are very rare and not found in private gardens. Possibly in the future there will be small plants available locally.



**2012 ANNUAL PICNIC AND  
MOST SPECTACULAR AUCTION  
OF THE YEAR**

SEPTEMBER 8TH  
GATE OPENS AT 8:30 A.M.  
9:30 A.M.—GARDEN TOUR  
11:00 PICNIC  
12 NOON—AUCTION

IN RUTH SALLENBACH'S  
FANTASTIC PALM GARDEN

6285 S. MILITARY TRAIL  
LAKE WORTH  
(ON THE WEST SIDE OF MILITARY TRAIL  
BETWEEN LANTANA AND HYPOLUXO ROADS)

PLEASE BRING A  
COVERED DISH,  
SALAD, OR  
DESSERT

THE PALM SOCIETY  
WILL PROVIDE  
WATER AND SODA

PLEASE BRING  
YOUR OWN  
CHAIR

**DONATED PLANTS OF ANY KIND  
WOULD BE APPRECIATED FOR THE AUCTION**



**HOLTON NURSERY**  
PALMS and CYCADS  
5221 3rd Road  
Lake Worth, FL. 33467  
Phone (561) 965-6792  
Email [cycadnut@gate.net](mailto:cycadnut@gate.net)



"By appointment only"



**THIS MONTH'S "THANK YOU"**

**AUCTION/PLANT DONATIONS**

Cathy Burger  
Jack Dewey  
Dale Holton

**MEETING REFRESHMENTS**

Cathy Burger  
Doyle Cochran  
Ingrid Dewey  
Duane Heiser  
Ruth Lynch  
Tom Ramiccio  
Bonnie Wilburn

**SPECIAL THANKS**

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

AND TO

**Paul Craft**  
For his donation of books for the Palm Society library.

**PLEASE MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND  
OUR ANNUAL FALL PLANT SALE**

October 20th and October 21st

At the Mounts Botanical Garden

(Additional details will be provided as they are finalized.)

**An Alternative Potting Mix**  
by Charlie Beck

As an amateur grower, I don't order truckloads of custom blended potting soil. Professional growers know just the right potting soil formula for growing their palms and cycads. Smalltime enthusiasts are limited to using commercially available potting soils sold in bags at gardening centers. I've tried many of these soil mixes with mixed results. These commercial soil mixes are fine for growing annuals but they tend to hold too much water for most palms and cycads.

We know that most palms and cycads grow better in a soil that provides excellent drainage. Many of the commercial growers include sharp silica sand in their mix to improve drainage. I have not found a source of this sand bagged in small quantities. I do not think that play sand sold in the box stores would be considered sharp silica sand. Perlite is an ingredient that improves drainage but large quantities of perlite added to the soil tend to float to the top of the container.

At a recent Begonia Society meeting a grower located on Florida's west coast shared his soil mix with the attendees. This mix has excellent drainage which is also an advantage for growing begonias.

Recipe

2 parts commercial potting soil  
1 part coarse horticultural perlite  
1 part fine pine bark

Bone meal and charcoal were added to his mix, but I leave those ingredients out of my mix. Racoons will tear apart any pot that contains bone meal and I didn't feel that the expense of adding charcoal was necessary. The potting soil I use is Fafard 2B. It is a mixture of Canadian peat and perlite and costs about \$10 for a 3 cubic foot bag. Four cubic foot bags of Perlite can be purchased for about \$10. Two cubic foot bags of fine pine bark can be found for \$6. I purchase the Fafard 2B soil and the perlite from Winfield Solutions located at 8245 US Highway 441 in Boynton Beach. The fine pine bark can be purchased at any of the Bushel Stops in our area. Some of the box stores sell large and small bags of perlite and sometimes carry fine pine bark sold as mulch.

To this soil mix I add appropriate amount of dolomite, nutricote and a granulated micronutrient such as Micromax (available at Winfield Solutions). To prevent soil from washing out of the pot's drain holes, I line the bottom of the pot with a single layer of newspaper. The newspaper does not impede drainage and holds the potting soil in the pot until the roots expand. I have greatly improved growth of my potted palms, cycads and roses with this soil mix. You can add even more perlite and fine pine bark if the plant requires even more drainage.



**Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society**

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**2013 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL**  
*(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)*

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\$25—Individual Membership  
\$35—Dual Membership (two individuals living at the same address)

Please send the annual Individual Membership Fee OR Dual Membership Fee to:

Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society  
P.O. Box 21-2228  
Royal Palm Beach, FL 33421  
Attn: Membership Chairman

Membership runs from January 1 through December 31. Membership includes one monthly newsletter and receipt of free palms, cycads, and other plants at the annual plant give-away in December.

FOR PALM SOCIETY USE ONLY				
\$		Check No.		Year

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### GENERAL MEETING

Date: September 5, 2012  
Time: 7:30 p.m.  
Speaker: Dale Holton  
Subject: Why I Grow Cycads  
Location: Mounts Botanical Garden

### EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

Date: September 5, 2012  
Time: 6:30 p.m.  
Location: Mounts Botanical Garden

### 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](http://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](mailto:whisler.tom@synthes.com)

## Growing Challenging Palms

by Charlie Beck

Don't let reports of palms being difficult to grow deter you from giving them a try. Many palms can grow well for many years before a freeze or other ailment takes them out. For the price of a three gallon potted palm you can enjoy the beauty of these hard to grow specimens. Palm Beach County's 2009-2010 record cold winters killed half of our *Licuala grandis* palms but I replanted these because of their beauty. We grew *Marojejya darianii* for many years in the ground before it mysteriously succumbed (see photo on page 11). I've replanted this species and added *Marojejya insignis* as well. We had several *Calyptrocalyx albertisianus* growing in our garden. Only one specimen survived the 2009-2010 winters. Due

to genetic variability some specimens can survive the challenges of growing in our area.

Many palms remain untested in our area. The majority of *Dypsis* species have not yet been planted out in Palm Beach County. Many of the miniature *Dypsis* species are gems with their clustered leaflets and long drip tips. Although some of these are not long lived, they can provide years of beauty in a shady garden. All *Calyptrocalyx* species are worth a try. Back in the early 1990's they were near impossible to purchase. Once you have seen *Licuala cordata* and *L. orbicularis*, you realize that you must grow these even if it means lifelong cultivation in pots.

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Maurice Lorenz  
Dave & Ashley Terrana

### *Dypsis lastelliana*

*Dypsis lastelliana* will be available for auction at the September Palm and Cycad Society meeting. Don't confuse this palm with the commonly available *Dypsis leptocheilos*. Both are referred to as teddy bear palms but *Dypsis lastelliana* is more tropical looking with somewhat pendulous leaves and a darker velvet, red brown crownshaft. In my opinion, *D. lastelliana* is much more visually attractive. This palm grows in Madagascar on white sand in moist areas. *D. lastelliana* does grow slower and is reported to be slightly less cold hardy than *D. leptocheilos*. (See photos on the bottom of page 11.)



**LEFT:** *Marojejya darianii* growing in the Beck garden.

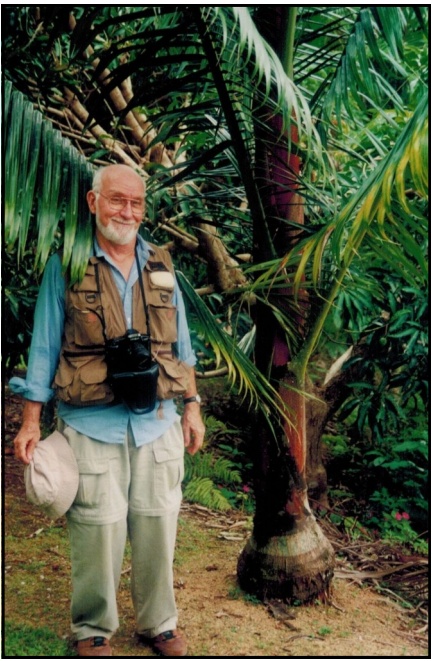
(Photo by Charlie Beck)

**BELOW (LEFT):** Long-time Palm Society member Bob Grimm lending scale to a *Dyopsis lastelliana* growing in Cairns, Australia in 2000.

(Photo by Charlie Beck)

**BELOW (RIGHT):** *Dyopsis lastelliana* crownshaft close up.

(Photo contributed to PACSOA by David Tanswell from *PALMS & CYCADS*, No. 51, Apr-Jun 1996.)



*Encephalartos hildebrandtii*  
male cones



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