



# Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society

*Affiliate of the International Palm Society*

Monthly Update

April 2014

## Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society

### 2014 Officers & Executive Committee

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Betty Ahlborn, Immediate Past President

(561) 798-4562

### Appointees

Charlie Beck, Librarian

Ruth Lynch, Refreshment Chairman

Brenda Beck, Web Master and Historian

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## UPCOMING GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, April 2, 2014, 7:30 p.m.

at the Mount's Botanical Garden building

Speaker: Craig Morell

Subject: Correcting ailing palms, fertilizer and palm care

## APRIL FEATURED AUCTION PLANT



*Dypsis mananjarensis*,  
the true "Mealy Bug Palm,"  
with polka dots on the petioles



Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society  
presents its Annual Spring

## Palm & Cycad Sale

Saturday, April 12, 9am to 4pm

Sunday, April 13, 9am to 3pm

Over 500 species  
of Palms & Cycads  
in all shapes and sizes.

NO ADMISSION CHARGE

**DONT MISS IT!**

**SEE AD ON  
PAGE 6**

## MARCH THANK YOU

### Food:

Gerard Valentini, Jim Gallagher, Janice Di-Paola, Shannon Skoulidakas, Tom and Mary Whisler, Steven Garland, Patrick Morris, Tom Ramiccio

### Plant Donations:

Steven Garland, Janice DiPaola, Charlie Beck, Dale Holton, Mike Harris

### Door:

Janice DiPaola

All photographs in this issue were provided by Charlie Beck.

Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society Members: You are encouraged to sign up for our digital newsletter, take advantage of our "full color edition" plus an eco-friendly method of delivery. Please email your request to [newsletters@palmbeachpalmcycadsociety.com](mailto:newsletters@palmbeachpalmcycadsociety.com) to opt-in to email newsletters and opt-out of copy by mail.

VISIT US ONLINE AT: <http://www.palmbeachpalmcycadsociety.com>

**FEATURED THIS MONTH: *Itaya amicornum***  
**by Charlie Beck**

*Itaya amicornum* is native to restricted areas of Columbia, Peru, and Brazil. It grows in wet areas along rivers and streams, and also grows away from water courses at elevations up to 1000 feet. This is a tropical rainforest palm which was discovered and named in 1972. This palm is critically endangered due to land clearing.

*Itaya amicornum* is a solitary, palmate palm. Its leaves resemble large pinwheels similar to those of a large *Licuala peltata* although the petioles are unarmed. The leaf undersides are silvery gray or white. There is only one species identified in the genus *Itaya*. This palm is most closely related to *Chelyocarpus* but can be easily distinguished by its split petiole bases similar to palms in the genus *Thrinax*. *Itaya amicornum* is a monoecious palm with showy white, hermaphroditic flowers. In habitat these palms top out at 15' tall on stems which measure 3-4" in diameter. Six foot diameter leaves are held on 7-8' long petioles.

More than 20 years ago I was shopping for palms at a South Florida Palm Society Sale located at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden. I was there at the sale opening early Saturday morning. I was with all of the other palm enthusiasts, running from booth to booth trying to locate the rarest of rare palms. I overheard two of the vendors talking about someone was selling a small *Itaya amicornum* for \$350. At that time I didn't know this palm, nor was I willing to pay \$350 for such a small specimen. I did remember the name and how highly revered this palm was. Flash forward to 2000. Dale Holton had obtained *Itaya amicornum* seeds and was growing this rare palm at his nursery. Dale shared one of his seedlings with me. I planted this seedling in 2001 in heavy shade in an area prone to flooding after repeated heavy rains. This specimen has flourished in these conditions and in 2010 I planted another specimen which has also grown at a healthy rate. The oldest specimen is 4.5' in overall height and the leaves measure 4' across.

Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden (FTBG) has a magnificent *Itaya amicornum* growing in their heated "Windows to the Tropics" greenhouse. This specimen is 25 years old. FTBG started planting out *Itaya* palms outside in the rainforest area in 1995. These palms seem to like growing in Palm Beach County sugar sand better than the rocky, alkaline soil of Dade County. The palms in our garden have definitely outgrown their cousins at FTBG. Our 13 year old plant is considerably larger than any of the 19 year old plants at FTBG. Obviously these palms are not sensitive to our considerably colder winter temperatures up here in Palm Beach County. I was actually surprised that these palms could be grown here in Palm Beach County considering the tropical areas where they are native. Many of the palms which grow with *Itaya amicornum* in habitat are too cold sensitive to grow locally. The reference books say that cultivation is restricted to zones 11 and 10b. Our specimen plants showed no ill effects to the record cold winters of 2009 and 2010. Dale Holton tells me that his plants also survived those winters at his garden located 8 miles from the ocean.

As you can see from the photos *Itaya amicornum* is an impressive palm. The huge pinwheel leaves with silver undersides would grace any garden. Even though I've never personally seen this palm grown in full sun, it is reported to be sun tolerant when mature. There are photos on the internet which show this palm growing without canopy at Nong Nooch Garden in Thailand. This is not a common palm readily available at our palm and cycad sales. I do know that our sponsor Holton Nursery will offer a single specimen of *Itaya amicornum* for sale at our upcoming Spring Palm and Cycad Sale at the Mount's Garden. He has a supply of seedlings which will be available in the future.

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recommendations of the Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society or its board of directors.***



**FEATURED THIS MONTH: *Itaya amicorum***



*Itaya amicorum*, 25 years old at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden  
grown in heated "Windows to the Tropics" greenhouse



**FEATURED THIS MONTH: *Itaya amicorum***



*Itaya amicorum*, 19 years old  
at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden



*Itaya amicorum*, 19 years old  
at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden



*Itaya amicorum*, 13 years old  
in the Beck Garden



*Itaya amicorum*, 4 years old  
in the Beck Garden



*Chelyocarpus ulei*, 47 years old  
at FTBG, closest relative to  
*Itaya amicorum*



*Corypha utan*, 48 years old  
at FTBG, Note spiral growth  
pattern on stem



*Pinanga curranii*  
newly emerged sucker



## Spring Is Here! What Did and Didn't Survive this Winter?

by Charlie Beck

I only had two palms which did not survive (without protection) this past winter: - *Manicaria saccifera* and *Pinanga curranii*. It's a shame about the *Pinanga curranii*. It was an exceptionally beautiful palm with fabulous leaf mottling. It was a vigorous grower that loved our sandy soil. This palm is so beautiful that it's worth protecting from the cold. I will replace it as soon as I can find one available and make sure it has winter protection. See photo on page 4.

We had a relatively mild winter in Palm Beach County. Our lowest temperature recorded at the Palm Beach International Airport was 38 degrees. There were several nights which I protected my cold sensitive palms with propane heaters. I started using propane heaters after the winter of 2010. I almost lost my prized *Elaeis oleifera* in that year and am not going to risk losing it again due to cold weather. The propane heaters that I use connect to a 20# propane tank. It has a single burner head. Double heater heads are available but they probably produce more heat than you need. You don't want

to toast your plants! I set them out on low setting. These units will burn for three nights on a tank of propane at that setting. You can buy heaters with starter buttons for about \$50 and units without for \$40. Harbor Freight sometimes sells these heaters for \$30. It's best to watch for their sales. These heaters have "tip over" shut off valves so you don't have to worry about starting a fire if they get knocked over. Luckily it has never rained on nights that I have set these out in the garden. I imagine the rain would extinguish the flame. There is a heat sensor which shuts off the propane supply if the flame goes out. To be safe, I would never use propane heaters in an enclosed space like a greenhouse.



heater assembled to  
20# Propane tank

What survived our winter temperatures this past year without protection? Both *Johannesteijsmannia altifrons* and *perakensis* came through with no ill effect as well as *Marojejya darianii* and *insignis*. *Pinanga caesia* also survived. Both *Johannesteijsmannia* and *Marojejya* are more cold hardy than generally regarded.

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# **Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society**

*presents its Annual Spring*

## **Palm & Cycad Sale**

**Saturday, April 12, 9am to 4pm**

**Sunday, April 13, 9am to 3pm**

**Over 500 species of  
Palms & Cycads in all shapes and sizes.**

**PLUS: A limited supply of top-rated fertilizer,**

**Palm and Cycad reference books, T-shirts**

**AND FREE KNOWLEDGEABLE ADVICE**

**NO ADMISSION CHARGE**

**DONT MISS IT!**

**AT MOUNTS BOTANICAL GARDEN**



**531 N. Military Trail • West Palm Beach**