Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society

Affiliate of the International Palm Society

Monthly Update April 2016

March "THANK YOU"

Door: Angie Peacock

Food: Charlie Beck, Ingrid Dewey, Janice DiPaola, Janet James, Elise Maloney, Patrick Morris, Richard & Bernie Murray, Ed Napoli, Sue Peppler, Angie Valero, Mary & Tom Whisler

Plants: Dale Holton

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UPCOMING MEETING

April 6, 2016
7:30 p.m.
At Mounts Botanical Garden

Speaker: Chad Husby, Ph.D.
Botanical Horticulturist
Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden

Subject: Garden Primeval: Ancient Plants in Nature and Cultivation

FEATURED AUCTION PLANTS:
Neoveitchia storckii
Pritchardia beccariana

VISIT US AT

www.palmbeachpalmcycadsociety.com

All photographs in this issue were provided by Dale Holton unless otherwise specified.

Featured This Month: *Lanonia dasyantha*

by Charlie Beck

Lanonia dasyantha is a palm introduced into South Florida cultivation in the 1990's under the mistaken name *Licuala radula.* In 2011 a new genus, *Lanonia*, was named by Andrew Henderson and Christine D. Bacon. Eight species of *Licuala* were transferred into *Lanonia.* All of these *Lanonia* species were dioecious unlike the genus *Licuala* which are typically monoecious. Molecular data shows that *Lanonia* is actually most closely related to *Johannesteijsmannia* rather than *Licuala*. *Licuala radula* is still a valid species, it but has probably never been introduced to South Florida.

L. dasyantha is native to Vietnam and southeast China. It grows in lowland rain forest to elevations of 3000'. It has been reported to grow on limestone. This species is listed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

L. dasyantha is a small, palmate palm which may be either solitary or clustering. Stems can be subterranean or can grow 5' tall. Stems measure up to 2" in diameter. The main attraction of this palm is its mottled dark and light green leaves. There are many palms with striking leaf mottling which rival *L. dasyantha* in beauty, but most of those require cold protection during our occasional cold winters in Palm Beach County. If you are interested in a palm with exceptionally beautiful leaf mottling that does not require cold protection, this is the palm for you. This palm has been reported to be cold hardy to 28°F. Mature leaves measure up to 3' across and are held on 6' long petioles. Leaves are divided into 5-13 leaflets with the center leaflet split into 2 broad lobes.

We have one *L. dasyantha* planted in our garden and it was only planted one year ago. Typically I do not feature a palm with such a short history in our garden, but this palm is such a showstopper that I couldn't wait for a longer track record. I planted our specimen on a mound of soil to minimize root competition from surrounding plants. The mound also reduces the possibility of inundation during times of heavy rainfall. I planted it in a shady situation, but it does receive some direct eastern sunlight. Luckily it was established prior to our well breakdown and it survived without supplemental irrigation for four months. Our palm has not shown any sign of clustering, but it's very small. The leaves measure only 18" across at this time. We have a second potted specimen which I plan to plant in a very prominent position so it can be appreciated every day.

Lucky for us, we have a local source, Holton Nursery, with an ample supply of *L. dasyantha.* Dale Holton introduced this palm to me and has donated several to our society for meeting auctions. Mail order and other South Florida sources also exist for this palm. This is a great palm for Palm Beach County and I hope you give it a try in your garden.

Featured This Month: *Lanonia dasyantha*

by Dale Holton

This is a really great palm for a shady area. I purchased my first plants many years ago from Jeff Marcus. I purchased two plants for $75 each. At that time, they were being called *Licuala radula.* I planted them in my newly made rain forest area. They are still there today but not as happy as they were years ago. I think their location is either too dark or maybe too wet.

As the years went by, the name was changed to *Licuala dasyantha.* It was found that there are male and female plants. My two plants have flowered several times but never seeded. In recent years the name was changed again to *Lanonia dasyantha.*

About three or four years ago, I saw an ad on Palm Talk for seeds of this palm. The seller was in China and he stated that his plants had been down to mid twenties with no damage. The seeds were relatively cheap, so I purchased 100 of them. Most of them grew and the ones that I haven't sold are now getting large. I purchased a second batch the following year and they were equally as good as the first ones.

If you have a shady area, this is a must have palm! I frequently refer to them as the "Poor Man's Mapu."

Lanonia dasyantha one year old in Beck garden
(photo by Charlie Beck)

Lanonia dasyantha in Holton garden

Lanonia dasyantha leaf detail in Holton garden

Lanonia dasyantha potted plant at Holton Nursery

Lanonia dasyantha
potted plants at Holton Nursery

Hard working volunteers at our Palm and Cycad Sale (*photo by Elise Maloney)*

Sommieria leucophylla in Fairchild Rare Plant House
(photo by Charlie Beck)

Colpothrinax wrightii forming belly
at Fairchild Garden *(photo by Charlie Beck)*

Hose End Timers

by Charlie Beck

Hose end timers are very useful in a smalltime nursery situation. Containerized plants generally require shorter, more frequent watering cycles than do in ground plants. Shade grown plants require shorter watering cycles than sun grown plants. Hose end timers give you added flexibility when watering containerized plants. Anyplace you need a custom water cycle, such as, filling a bird bath, drip irrigation, or topping off a fish pond, these timers may fit the bill for you.

I have used hose end timers for more than 30 years. I've bought many of the major brands including Nelson, Orbit, Raindrip, Melnor and many others including solar powered units. I'll share some of my thoughts on these timers.

Over the years hose end timers have become easier to program. Old style timers required special instructions to set the program. Sometimes instructions were printed on the timer in small print which would disappear due to outdoor exposure. Sometimes instructions were only shown in the owner's manual. If you lost the instructions, you were in trouble. My theory is that programming these timers should be obvious. If you need to consult instructions in order to program the unit, don't buy that model.

Timer durability is an important factor. Some brands are much more durable than others. Occasionally even the best model is short lived, but some brands tend to last longer than others. Generally, I think that water intrusion though the timer housing is the main cause of timer failure. Battery compartments, dials and buttons all need to be adequately sealed.

Timers either come with or without LCD display screens. I avoid any timer which does not have a clear, large, LCD display. I don't want to kneel on the ground with reading glasses to monitor the condition or determine the programming cycle. It should be easy to see if the timer is turned on or off with a simple glance. Battery charge indicator should also be easy to read.

The timer should have a clock display so that coordination of different timers might be easily accomplished. If your supply of water comes from a pump you can time watering events together to minimize the number of "pump on" cycles. The clock display should be large and easy to see in the sunlight. Timers without a display screen only have internal clocks which turn on at an interval from the actual time you set it. If you happen to set it at 8AM for a 24 hour cycle, it will cycle every day at 8AM. If you want the timer to cycle at midnight then you have to physically set the timer at midnight. There is no way to recall the start time on these timers because there is no clock display on the unit.

If you use well water to supply your timer, I highly recommend using a hose end water filter instead of the screened washer which is typically supplied with the timer. If you use city water the screened washer works fine, but well water can clog the screened washer quite rapidly. This will result in reduced or no water flow through your timer.

The only timers that I currently use are the Nelson 56607 Single Outlet and the Nelson 56612

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A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU

to

Bob Grimm

for his generous donation of books
to the Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society Library

Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society Ramble

Saturday, April 9, 2016
9:00 a.m.

Palm Society board member Gerry Valentini has invited members for a tour of his 1.79 acre beautifully landscaped garden. Gerry asks that you wear comfortable and safe shoes.

The address and directions to Gerry's garden will be provided at the April meeting and will be emailed to members separately.

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Double Outlet Timers. Generally I have found these to be the most durable and easy to use timers. They have a large, bright LCD display. Programing is obvious- no reading owner's manual is required. They have a dial which allows easy programming and easy on/off control. You can see at a glance if the timer is turned on or off. It has an easy to use manual override to provide instant timed watering in addition to the programing. The up/down buttons are well-sealed and are large and easy to push. The Double Outlet timer has the ability to program two unique timing events through separate outlets. If you want to water your sun grown containers 30 minutes and your shade grown containers 15 minutes, you can do it all with this single timer. The best feature of these timers is the following. The timer continually flashes on the screen when the next timer event will occur. This is an important feature. Sometimes all of these timers have a glitch which erases the programing. It doesn't occur often but when it does occur on this timer, it will not flash the next timer event. You can tell at a glance that a reprogramming is required. No other timer that I ever used indicates that the next timer event has gone awry. You can see this indication at a glance without entering programming mode. These timers sell for less than $40 on the internet and are well worth the investment.

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Nelson Single and Double Outlet Hose End Timers

Palm and Cycad Sale participants
(photo by Elise Maloney)