



Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society

Affiliate of the International Palm Society

Monthly Update

June 2016

May "THANK YOU"

Door: Lew Burger

Food: Don Bittel, Cathy & Lew Burger, Robin Crawford, Janice DiPaolo, Richard Murray, Ed Napoli, Tom & Carol Ramiccio, Chris Spencer, Gerry Valentini

Plants: Elise Moloney, Vicky Murphy, Palm City Palms

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Appointees

Brenda Beck, Historian
Brenda LaPlatte, Webmaster

UPCOMING MEETING

June 1, 2016

7:30 p.m.

At Mounts Botanical Garden

Speaker: Chip Jones

Subject: The Holy Grail of Cycads of Mexico

FEATURED AUCTION PLANTS:

Kerriodoxa elagans

Neoveitchia storckii

VISIT US AT

www.palmbeachpalmcycadsociety.com

All photographs in this issue were provided
by Charlie Beck unless otherwise specified.

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Featured This Month: *Guihaia argyrata*
by Charlie Beck

Guihaia argyrata is a short palmate palm native to southern China and northern Vietnam. It grows on steep limestone slopes up to an elevation of 3000'. It grows in the shade under a canopy of trees or it grows in full sun in exposed areas.

G. argyrata was originally named *Trachycarpus argyratus* in 1982. In 1985 it was transferred into a newly established genus named *Guihaia*. This palm is closely related to *Rhapis*. I remember an account that the first commercial shipment of *G. argyrata* seeds to South Florida were actually sold as *Rhapis*.

G. argyrata has short or subterranean stems which, with age, may creep along the ground. This palm clusters with age but may be solitary for quite some time. Stems typically measure 2" in diameter and max out at 1-1/2' tall. *G. argyrata* is dioecious with separate male and female plants. Fruit matures from green to a blue-black color. Black leaf sheath fibers cover the stem. The fibers are coarse, stiff, and form upright spines.

Leaves are truly palmate without a costa. They can measure up to 3' across. Unlike most palmate fronds seen in South Florida, the leaflets are reduplicate or are shaped like an inverted V. *G. argyrata* holds 14-26 deeply divided deep green leaflets. Rarely, leaves can be undivided or divided into 2 segments. A prominent vein runs down the center of the leaflets. The lower surface of the leaf is either white or bronze colored. The petioles are smooth.

G. argyrata is relatively new to South Florida. Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden (FTBG) first planted these palms in 1989. Palms at FTBG grew vigorously. They felt at home growing on the limestone substrate. The palms quickly grew 4-5' tall measured to the top of the fronds and then they began to clump. Unfortunately when the clump of stems developed the individual character of a solitary stem was lost. The palms became a tangle of crossing stems. These palms are still attractive in my opinion.

The pinwheel fronds with the bronze underside look quite unique. The palms at FTBG are planted both in full sun and in partial shade. Both exposures seem to suit this palm. The palms at FTBG survived the 1989 Christmas freeze when temperatures dropped to 27° on two consecutive nights. This palm has been reported to survive temperatures as low as 18°.

We have two *G. argyrata* planted in our garden. The oldest palm was planted in our native sand in the shade 16 years ago. This location is in a low area which is periodically inundated after repeated heavy rainfall. Our younger specimen, 13 years old, was planted in full sun in shell rock on an elevated area which never floods. Both of our specimens have grown slowly. They are both about the same size, about 3' tall overall. Clumping has not yet begun, so both palms are a perfectly symmetrical display of radiating pinwheel leaves. The dark green fronds with bronze undersides really put on a show when the wind blows.

G. argyrata doesn't seem to mind occasional flooding and it is reported to be drought tolerant. It grows well in sun or shade. It is cold hardy to zone 8B. *G. argyrata* grows equally well in sandy and shell rock soil. With recommended fertilization it has never developed micronutritional deficiencies. The slow growth rate in Palm Beach County is a bonus. It appears that clumping is delayed when not grown on solid limestone, so we can appreciate perfectly formed solitary palms for many years. *G. argyrata* doesn't take up much space, so it can fit into a small, garden plan. Its short stature will insure that the attractive, pinwheel fronds are always displayed at eye level.

G. argyrata is not commonly offered for sale in South Florida. There is an abundance of fruit being produced at FTBG, so maybe we'll see some nurseries offer this palm at our local sales.

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"By appointment only"



Guihaitia argyrata—16 years old in the Beck garden



Guihaitia argyrata—leaf underside



Guihaia argyrata—27 years old at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden



Guihaia argyrata—immature fruit



Guihaia argyrata -stem spines



Orchids love growing on skinny palms



Guihaia argyrata—reduplicate leaves



Coccothrinax sp—induplicate leaves



Microcycas calocoma— grown by Dr. Daniel Jedlicka in Czech Republic

Palm and Cycad Enthusiasts around the World Reach Out

by Charlie Beck

Our Society maintains a website; <http://palmbeachpalmcycadsociety.com/>. Our website contains a historical reference of past Society Newsletters dating back to 2009. It also contains a separate database of all the palms and cycads featured in our newsletters. Meetings, Events and Officers are all listed along with a search engine which can be used to find various subjects, such as, fertilizer, planting and equipment recommendations and reviews. Contact info is also included on our website.

Over the past year our website has received nearly 140,000 hits. In one month alone, we had visitors from 25 countries. Countries from the tropics and subtropics were well represented, but surprisingly many countries with temperate climates were also listed, such as Ukraine, Serbia, Poland, Russia, Romania and many more. Obviously palms and cycads are popular worldwide.

Our website receives emails every month from local and international sources. Many people ask for plant identifications or ask us to diagnose plant problems. Many others want to sell or buy particular seeds or plants. One such communication was from Dr. Daniel Jedlicka from Prague, Czech Republic. He was trying to locate sizeable *Microcycas calocoma* for sale in South Florida. He sent photos of 6 large container grown *Microcycas calocoma* that he



grew in his heated greenhouse (see photo on page 5). In later communication, Daniel referred me to his educational website: www.microcycas.cz/en/. This website is dedicated to *Microcycas calocoma* and other cycad species. It contains many photos from his extensive worldwide travel, tracking down cycads in their native habitat. Daniel even posted a time elapse video of his *Microcycas calocoma* flushing a new set of leaves. It's located on the home page of his website up in the upper left hand corner. These cycads grow leaves one leaf at a time, so the 55 second video must have compressed several weeks or months of growth. I highly recommend exploring this amazing website.

Chelated Iron Update

by Charlie Beck

In a previous newsletter, I reported that applying iron chelated with EDDHA was effective in correcting iron deficiency on palms planted in alkaline soil. The brand that I used was Sequestrene 138Fe. Other brands of the same supplement should be equally effective. This water soluble supplement greened up newly emerging fronds although it had little or no affect on old fronds.

Due to distractions caused by well failure, I discontinued applying this supplement to my trial palms. Iron deficiency soon reappeared. Although this is the most effective iron supplement on alkaline soil, repeated applications are necessary.

If you are correcting iron deficiency in less alkaline soil with a PH closer to 7, I have found that iron sulfate is much longer lasting than the water soluble chelates and it is much less expensive.

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