



Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society

Affiliate of the International Palm Society

Monthly Update

May 2017

APRIL "THANK YOU"

- Door: Tom Ramiccio & Don Bittel
- Food: Charlie Beck, Don Bittel, Ingrid Dewey, Janice DiPaola, Ruth Lynch, Richard Murray, Tom Ramiccio, Chris & Greg Spencer
- Plants: Don Bittel, David Colonna
- Auction: Don Bittel & Terry Lynch

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- Betty Ahlborn, Immediate Past President
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Appointees

- Brenda Beck, Historian
Brenda LaPlatte, Webmaster
Ruth Lynch, Refreshment Chair

UPCOMING MEETING

May 3, 2017
7:30 p.m.
At Mounts Botanical Garden
Speaker: Robin Crawford
Subject: Palm Sightings in Hawaii

FEATURED AUCTION PLANTS:

Chambeyronia macrocarpa var hookeri
Dypsis lanceolata
Licuala sallehana
See photos on page 10

VISIT US AT

www.palmbeachpalmcycadsociety.com

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

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.

Featured This Month: *Phoenix rupicola* - Cliff Date Palm

Phoenix rupicola is a solitary, pinnate palm native to Eastern Himalaya. It can be found in North-eastern India and Bhutan. It is native to the subtropics, and grows in warm, wet forest or in open areas on dry, steep rocky hillsides. Native elevation is between 1000 & 4000 feet.

P. rupicola is an intermediate sized palm. It is about the same scale as a single stemmed *Phoenix reclinata*, but much more graceful - like a large *Phoenix roebelenii*. Stems can reach a height of 25' and measure 10" in diameter. Stems typically shed old leaf-bases except near the crown.

Fronds are often arching and twisted. Drooping leaflets lend grace to this tropical-looking palm. Fronds can grow 10' long, but are often shorter. Leaf color is a bright green. Spines on the petiole are usually soft and pliable when compared to other *Phoenix* species.

Being dioecious, *P. rupicola* requires a male and female plant to produce seeds. Infructescences are pendulous when mature. Obovoid fruit measure about 3/4" long. Fruit color starts yellow, changes to red, then matures to purple-brown.

P. rupicola should be cold hardy throughout all of Palm Beach County. It has been successfully grown in Orlando, Vero Beach and in California. It is

reported to have moderate salt tolerance. Once established it is also reported to be draught resistant.

P. rupicola was one of the first palms planted in our garden. It grew at a moderate rate and formed a clear stem. For some unknown reason that palm died. It is listed as susceptible to Lethal Yellowing (LY), but so many other common palms are also listed. LY doesn't seem to be the threat that it was 30 years ago. I replanted 12 years ago and that specimen has grown well. I grow it in full sun but others have successfully grown it in shade. With regular fertilization and irrigation, it has never developed nutritional deficiencies. It tolerates occasional inundation without any negative effect.

P. rupicola is the perfect scale for planting in the landscape. Its ultimate height is 25', so it will never outgrow a typical Florida homestead. If you like the graceful appearance of *P. roebelenii* but you want a larger, more dramatic palm, plant *P. rupicola* instead. Once established, it will grow with or without supplemental irrigation. It even accepts periodic inundation. It's a tough palm that will survive with only occasional fertilization, but once you see its beauty, you'll want to baby it.

P. rupicola was more widely planted 30 years ago. It's time to make it a common palm in Palm Beach County.



Phoenix rupicola
at Flamingo Gardens in Davie, FL



Phoenix rupicola
at Beck Garden in Palm Beach County, FL

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Phoenix rupicola at Tropical Research & Education Center in Homestead, FL



Phoenix rupicola
Clean stem except near crown
at Flamingo Gardens in Davie, FL



Phoenix rupicola
Shade grown at John Kennedy Garden in Vero Beach, FL

Palm Beach Palm and Cycad Garden Tour
by Charlie Beck

The Palm Beach Palm and Cycad Society (PBPCS) and Bromeliad Society of the Palm Beaches (BSPB) sponsored a joint tour of two fabulous gardens. The first garden toured was of PBPCS Board Member, Richard Murray. The second garden toured was of long time PBPCS member and also the Past-President of BSPB, Joe Libertucci. An extensive collection of palms, cycads and bromeliads were planted in both gardens.

Both gardens were located in unincorporated Palm Beach County. They are spaced about a mile apart, so growing climate and soil were similar. If 45th Street in West Palm Beach extended 12 miles inland, that is the approximate locations of the gardens. The gardens are west of West Palm Beach's Water Catchment area, with Pond Cypress Natural Area due east and Grassy Waters Preserve to the

northeast. I'm not sure if historically this area was part of a larger wetland or, more recently, possibly native pine flatwoods, but I do know that the soil was much finer than the sugar sand located 4 miles inland in our garden. From observation of plant growth, it was obvious that this soil had a higher moisture and nutrient retention when compared to sugar sand.

Richard Murray's garden was just over 2 1/2 acres. Richard has a long history growing plants in Florida. He has grown in commercial nurseries but currently runs Richard Murray Horticultural Consulting, Inc. Richard knows many tricks of the trade which he often shares with palm enthusiasts at our meetings. He expertly grew the palms distributed at our Society's year-end 2016 Great Palm Give-Away. Richard's wife, Berni is also an active plant enthusiast. She maintains a productive vegetable and flower garden, and I'm sure she played an active role developing the overall landscape.

The Murray Garden is over 20 years old, so there are many mature specimens of palms and cycads. I was told all supplemental irrigation was applied with hose end sprinklers. The plants looked great, so it shows you that regular irrigation is not as important when growing in a soil with a higher moisture holding capacity.

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Richard Murray Garden



Richard Murray with *Hyophorbe verschaffeltii x indica*



Butia odorata



Copernicia alba



Hyophorbe lagenicaulis



Lew Burger with *Lantania lontaroides*



Astrocaryum alatum

(561) 586-2332



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"By appointment only"

Richard Murray Garden



Cocos nucifera "Maypan"



Berni Murray with her productive & beautiful veggie garden



Syagrus schizophylla



Dyopsis cabadae



Elaeis guineensis

(Continued from page 3)

Richard had some massive palms, such as *Cocos nucifera* "Maypan hybrid (Coconut), *Elaeis guineensis* (African Oil Palm), and *Roystonea regia* (Royal Palm). The native *Acoelorrhaphe wrightii* (Paurotis Palm), which naturally grows in swampy areas was perfectly healthy. It is a challenge to grow in sugar sand, so I was glad to see it in its full glory. Another swamp dweller, *Phoenix reclinata*, grew in a row along the property line. *Copernicia alba*, *Astrocaryum alatum*, and *Copernicia baileyana* all seemed to appreciate the native soil.

The garden contained an interesting hybrid, *Hyophorbe verschaffeltii x indica*. *Butia odorata* were outstanding in both gardens. I have found them variable or short lived closer to the coast. Richard had a nice specimen of *Chamaerops humilis* growing in a well drained raised bed.

We finished touring Richard's garden and proceeded to **Joe Libertucci's** garden. As you drove down Joe's block there was no question if you were at the right address. It was obvious that this was a "palm enthusiast" garden. Everything was so green! The gar-

(Continued on page 6)

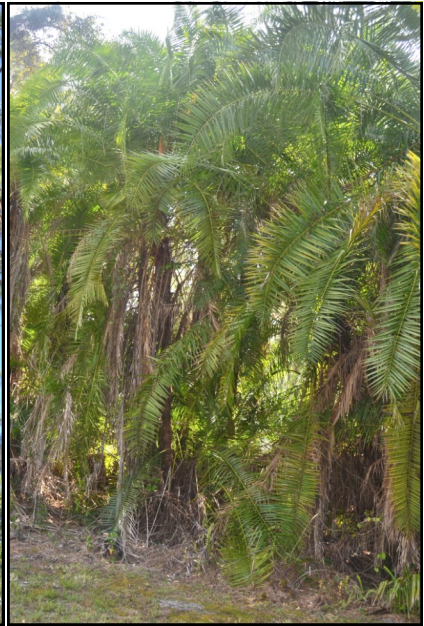
Richard Murray Garden



Copernicia baileyana



Roystonea regia



Phoenix reclinata



Dioon spinulosum



Chamaerops humilis



Acoelorrhaphe wrightii

(Continued from page 5)

den is one acre in size and is fertilized three times a year.

All supplemental irrigation is provided with a hose end sprinkler. Even though we were in the dry season, all of the palms looked perfectly happy. Either Joe spends a lot of time moving around the sprinkler, or the soil provides great moisture holding ca-

capacity.

Joe had an amazing collection of palms. Some of them I've had little or no success growing in our garden, such as *Livistona jenkinsiana*, *Livistona bentharii* and *Dypsis lastelliana*. There was a debate on whether *Dypsis lastelliana* (Teddy Bear Palm) was actually *D. leptocheilos*. Joe bought it as *D. lastelliana* and it looked just like the one I saw in Queen-

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Joe Libertucci Garden



Joe Libertucci with *Arenga hookeriana*



Dypsis lastelliana (most likely)



Bowenia spectabilis



Livistona chinensis

(Continued from page 6)

sland, Australia. Either way it was outstanding.

Joe had a grouping of *Bowenia spectabilis* which was outstanding! He had mature specimens of *Arenga hookeriana* and *Kerriodoxa elegans* that were particularly well grown. The garden had a wide assortment of *Livistona* species including a fine specimen of *L. saribus* with its giant, petiole spines. Joe wasn't sure what was crossed with his *Copernicia berterioana* hybrid, but it was an attractive specimen.

The *Copernicia prunifera* looked like it was

jumping out of the ground. The growth was so fast, its crown of fronds must have been 10' long.

My personal favorite palm of the day was a surprising choice. It was Joe's *Livistona chinensis*. Joe bought this palm at Home Depot. You never know. It might be a hybrid, but it must be the fastest growing palm in all of Florida. Everyone was amazed that it was the common Chinese Fan Palm. The bud produced fronds so quickly, they didn't have a chance to die off. The length of stem with healthy fronds was incredible!

Joe Libertucci Garden



Copernicia berteriana hybrid



Copernicia prunifera



Phoenix sylvestris



Livistona australis



Kerriodoxa elegans



Livistona benthamii



Livistona decora

Joe Libertucci Garden



Livistona saribus



Livistona saribus



Latania lontaroides



Sabal mauritiformis



Chambeyronia macrocarpa



Dypsis carlsmithii



Livistona jenkinsiana



Dioon merolae

Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society May Garden Tour

Don Middlebrook's Garden
in Jupiter, FL

May 6, 2017
10:00 a.m.

We will email Don's address to
Palm Society members prior to this event
and flyers will be handed out at our May 3rd meeting.

This Month's Auction Plants



Chambeyronia macrocarpa var hookeri
Bright red emergent leaf,
Yellow crownshaft,
Excellent grower in Palm
Beach County



Dypsis lanceolata
for sun or shade
Excellent grower in Palm
Beach County



Dypsis lanceolata
waxy stem detail



Licuala sallahana
rare palm for moist
shaded area
Photo courtesy of Palm &
Cycad Societies of Aus-
tralia