



Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society

Affiliate of the International Palm Society

Monthly Update

December 2010

FEATURED THIS MONTH: *Dioon merolae*



Eleven year old *Dioon merolae* in the Beck garden. (Photos by Charlie Beck)



Female cone



Male cone

FRONT COVER: *Dioon merolae* growing at Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden.

(Photo by Charlie Beck)

Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society Officers

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 Marty Dougherty, Web Master
 Ruth Lynch, Refreshment Chairman (561) 312-5046
 Kitty Philips & Susan Cioci, Activities & Events Coordinators

VISIT US AT palmbeachpalmcycadsociety.com

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Page	
4	Featured this Month: <i>Dioon merolae</i>
5	2010 Annual Holiday Party, Auction, and Plant Give-away
6	Dr. Broschat Discusses Nutrition and Fertilization of Palms
6	2011 Officers Elected at November Meeting
8	November Door Prize Winner
8	This Month's "Thank You"
9	Garden Timesaver Back Pack Spreader

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FEATURED THIS MONTH: *Dioon merolae*
 by Charlie Beck

Dioon merolae is a very distinctive cycad. It is easy to recognize due to its leaflets being oriented like an open venetian blind. Each leaflet is held parallel to its adjacent leaflet. The leaves are dark green and are covered with a fine dense tomentum. Unlike some of the larger *Dioons* which grow well in Palm Beach County, *Dioon merolae* is a manageable size with its 3' long leaves arranged in a formal rosette.

Dioon merolae is native to Chiapas and Oaxaca, Mexico. It grows in well drained open pine-oak forest at elevations of 2,000 to 4,000 feet. In habitat, the stems can grow 8 to 16 inches in diameter and 10 feet tall. Very old specimens can sucker and grow stems at odd angles. It is considered threatened in the wild and can be difficult to find for sale.

It was first officially described to science in 1981.

We have 3 specimens growing in our garden. They are planted in an area close to the house. Shell rock was brought in to raise the house foundation 3 feet above adjacent land. We planted our *Dioon merolae* 11 years ago in this highly alkaline compacted soil. They were originally planted in full sun but are now lightly shaded by *Coccothrinax* palms. They have thrived in these conditions and have outgrown *D. edule*, *D. agustifolia*, and *D. califanoi* in our garden.

Grow *Dioon merolae* for its formal appearance, distinctive leaflet structure, and manageable size. It is a good replacement for the scale prone *Cycas revoluta*.

GROWING CONDITIONS IN OUR GARDEN FOR <i>Dioon merolae</i>	
Location	4 miles from ocean in suburban Lantana
Soil	Shell rock fill
Irrigation	¾ inch applied twice a week
Fertilization	3 times a year with Palm special analysis
Light	Full sun to partial shade
Micronutrient Deficiencies	None observed
Insect Damage	None observed
Hurricane Resistance	Good

2010 ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY, AUCTION AND PLANT GIVE-AWAY

Wednesday, December 1, 2010
At Mounts Botanical Garden
7:00 p.m.

Sorry—members only

Membership can be obtained at the door
\$30 - includes \$5 4th quarter 2010 and 2011 Membership

Please bring a covered dish,
dessert, or non-alcoholic beverage

Plant donations of all types accepted for
auction and the "GREAT END OF YEAR"
give-away raffle



PLEASE DONATE
SOME OF
YOUR FAVORITE
PLANTS



Dr. Broschat Discusses Nutrition and Fertilization of Palms

by Brenda Beck

Timothy Broschat, Ph.D. of the University of Florida – Ft. Lauderdale REC was the guest speaker at the November meeting. Dr. Broschat gave an extremely interesting presentation that shared the latest findings regarding nutrition and fertilization of landscape palms and discussed common nutritional deficiencies.

Dr. Broschat stressed the importance of using an 8-2-12+4Mg

fertilizer that contains 100 percent of the nitrogen, potassium, and magnesium in controlled release form. He also reported that it would be better not to fertilize at all than to use turf or landscape fertilizers with only water soluble potassium or magnesium within 50 feet of any palm. He stated that use of the high nitrogen water soluble fertilizers within 50 feet of your landscape palms will throw off the nutritional balance of your palms and cause deficiencies.

A copy of Dr. Broschat's handout that contains a summary of his recommendations and website address can be found on page 7.



2011 Officers Elected at November Meeting

The Palm Society officers elected for 2011 are as follows:

- Betty Ahlborn, President
- Tom Ramiccio, First Vice President, Sales
- Marshall Dewey, Second Vice President, Planting
- Dale Holton, Third Vice President, Programs
- Ruth Sallenbach, Secretary
- Ingrid Dewey, Treasurer
- Tom Whisler, Membership Chairman
- Brenda Beck, Editor & Historian

We all look forward to working with members to make 2011 an informative and exciting year for all Palm Society members.

Nutrition and Fertilization of Landscape Palms

Timothy K. Broschat, Ph.D.
University of Florida-Ft. Lauderdale REC

1. Common nutritional deficiencies on landscape palms

- a. Nitrogen—reduced growth rate; uniform chlorosis of older or all leaves
- b. Potassium—translucent yellow-orange or necrotic spotting, marginal necrosis, and frizzling on oldest leaves; more severe on leaf tips than bases; can be fatal; treat with sulfur-coated potassium sulfate plus 1/3 as much prilled kieserite to prevent K:Mg imbalances
- c. Magnesium—marginal chlorosis on the oldest leaves; treat with prilled (gran) kieserite
- d. Iron—interveinal or general chlorosis (sharply delimited green veins) on newest leaves; treat alkaline soils with soil application of Trachelene Fe, or FeEDDHA (Sequestrene or Sprint 138) for foliar applications use FeDTPA (Sequestrene 330)
- e. Manganese—diffuse interveinal chlorosis accompanied by interveinal necrotic streaking on newest leaves; also causes reduced new leaf size and frizzling; more severe at leaf base than tip; is often fatal on palms; treat with $MnSO_4$ (TecMangam)
- f. Boron—small, crumpled new leaves; may cause a sharp bend in the trunk and horizontal growth; kinked and drooping new leaves; tips of leaves truncated or angular; spear leaves may not open normally; can kill the bud. Treat deficient palms with a drench consisting of 2-4 oz of Borax or Solubor dissolved in 5 gal of water spread over the soil under the canopy. Do not repeat for at least 5 months.

2. Landscape palm fertilization (for sand and limestone soils; on fertile muck soils, most or all N may need to be eliminated from fertilizer program)

- a. Use 8-2-12+4Mg analysis fertilizers that include all micronutrients
- b. 100% of N, K, and Mg should be in controlled release form
- c. Broadcast using a rotary spreader under the canopy of isolated palms or entire beds or landscapes
- d. Apply up to 1.5 lbs of actual fertilizer (not N) per 100 sq. ft. every 3 months
- e. DO NOT USE TURF or landscape fertilizers with only water soluble K or Mg within 50 ft. of any palm. USE CONTROLLED RELEASE 8-2-12 PALM & LANDSCAPE FERTILIZER described above for ALL plants in the landscape that are to be fertilized, including turf in mixed landscapes.

For more details, see <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/EP261> and <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/EP273>

THIS MONTH'S "THANK YOU"

Meeting Refreshments

Doyle Cochran
Ingrid & Marshall Dewey
Maryann & Mim Gallagher
Dale Holton
John Irvine
Ruth & Terry Lynch
Lauren & Pat Morris
Tom Ramiccio
Mary & Tom Whisler

Plant Donations

Betty Ahlborn
Marshall Dewey
Dale Holton
John Irvine



SPECIAL THANKS

to
Doyle Cochran
for arriving at 5:00 p.m. to keep
the Mounts building open for us.

Winner of the November 3rd
Door Prize was
Charlie Beck
who won a *Cycas debaoensis*.



Village Marina

464-4391

Wes Taylor

*Please share your garden experiences.
Submit your stories and photos to beck4212@aol.com*

Garden Timesaver Back Pack Spreader

by Charlie Beck

At last month's Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society meeting, Dr. Broschat presented his most recent fertilizer recommendations for palms in the landscape. Dr. Broschat recommended fertilizing palms every three months – even in the winter. In the past, I have skipped the winter application of fertilizer but I am willing to evaluate this fourth application. Certainly, his photo of a Coconut Palm with a full head of fronds (even downward pointing green fronds) was impressive. Dr. Broschat said this growth was due to a four time a year fertilizer schedule. A typical Coconut Palm would re-



quire 15 pounds of fertilizer applied four times a year.

With all of this fertilization, I wanted to share with you the method I use to apply fertilizer. Many years ago, I hand broadcast fertilizer from a five gallon bucket. With this method, the fertilizer application was not uniform. I also tried a wheel-driven spreader which gave a uniform distribution but was hard to maneuver between plants. Many years ago, I discovered a back pack spreader. It holds up to 40 pounds of fertilizer and has back straps for carrying while hand cranking the rotary wheel. This even distribution of

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

weight is much better than carrying a five gallon bucket with one hand. The hopper is plastic and the crank mechanism is stainless steel. The frame is painted steel. You can adjust the fertilizer rate by adjusting the opening size. You can throw fertilizer right, left, center, or any combination of the three directions. The on-off lever is easy to operate. These spreaders are available on the Internet and cost less than \$100.

I have been using my spreader for 15 years and it is still in good working condition. It saves time and effort and is well worth the investment. I do recommend wearing a dust mask when using this spreader to eliminate breathing fertilizer dust.

Caribbean Palms Nursery



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c/o Brenda Beck
P.O. Box 21-2228
Royal Palm Beach, FL 33421
(Check must be received prior to print.)

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 per person 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.

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.



Dioon merolae leaf detail



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**PLEASE RENEW YOUR
PALM SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP TODAY**

