



FEATURED THIS MONTH: *Zombia antillarum*



Nineteen year old *Zombia antillarum* growing in the Beck garden.

(Photo by Charlie Beck)

FRONT COVER: Showy stems of *Zombia antillarum*

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Featured this Month: *Zombia antillarum*

by Charlie Beck

Zombia antillarum is a monoecious, clustering palm endemic to the island of Hispaniola. It naturally grows on low elevation hills in dry areas. It is reported to be salt tolerant and to grow in serpentine soil in the Dominican Republic. This palm is endangered due to habitat destruction. The leaves are palmate, green above and silvery below. The leaflets have slightly bifid tips. The most distinctive feature of *Z. antillarum* is the stem. The stems are covered with straw colored fiber and are armed with stout, outward and downward pointing spines. This stem fiber is persistent and stays attractive for many years. The inflorescences are shorter than the leaves and the fruit color is white.

We have a single specimen of *Z. antillarum* planted in our garden. It was planted 19 years ago. The tallest stems top out at 12 1/2'. The stems measure 4" in diameter. The clump diameter is 2'. We planted our specimen in full sun but I have also seen well grown specimens grown in the shade. This is not a fast growing palm. It takes quite a few years for that unique stem to form but it is sure worth the wait. Most palm enthusiasts are drawn to the beauty of this palm.



Even though in nature this palm grows on dry hills and in some cases in serpentine soil, our specimen grows well in sandy soil which floods after repeated heavy rainfall. There is no need to mound this palm above grade to improve drainage. Twice a week irrigation seems to agree with this palm. Our record cold winters of 2009 and 2010 had no noticeable effect on our specimen. Even with regular fertilization *Z. antillarum* can occasionally show magnesium deficiency. This can easily be corrected with an application of dolomite lime or magnesium sulfate.

This palm is the perfect scale for planting in landscapes with one story houses. In habitat it is reported to top out at 10' tall. In cultivation it could grow taller but would still be in scale. Plant this palm close to walkways where the attractive stems can be appreciated. The clumping habit of this palm will tend to keep people from walking into the spiny stems.

Zombia antillarum has outperformed our native *Acoelorrhaphe wrightii* (paurotis palm) in our garden. *Z. antillarum* is slower growing and is more compact, but it shows less nutritional deficiency than *A. wrightii*. Our *Z. antillarum* has bloomed for many years but has never set seeds. This can be considered a plus if you want to avoid a carpet of seedlings growing around your palm.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Date: Wednesday, June 6, 2012
Location: Mounts Botanical Garden
Time: 6:20 p.m.—Palm Society Board Meeting
Time: 7:30 p.m.—General Meeting
Speaker: Laura Sanagorski, University of Florida IFAS
Subject: White Flies and Other Garden Pests

THIS MONTH'S "THANK YOU"

AUCTION/PLANT DONATIONS
Dale Holton

MEETING REFRESHMENTS
Robin Crawford
Ruth Eberly
Steve Garland
Pat Lindsey
Tom Ramiccio

SPECIAL THANKS
to

Charlie & Brenda Beck

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

And to **Betty Ahlborn, Charlie and Brenda Beck, and Tom Whisler**, for potting up the year-end giveaway plants.

HOLTON NURSERY
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"By appointment only"

Caribbean Palms Nursery



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Year-end Giveaway Plants Purchased

by *Charlie Beck*

Year-end giveaway plants have been purchased. They were potted by volunteers and are now happily growing at Betty Ahlborn's Paddlefoot Farm Nursery. This year the Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society has purchased several unique and special palms for auction at our meetings. These special palms were obtained at a greater cost than the typical giveaway plant. After a few months of growth, we will auction these plants. I hope our members will support the society by bidding up the price of these auction plants so we can expand purchase of these palms in future years.

Our group of year-end giveaway plants are all great palms for growing in Palm Beach County. Two of those are shown on the inside back cover.

Calyptrocalyx hollrungii is one of the best of the genus for growing in Palm Beach County. It is a clumper with emerging salmon leaves. It grows best in moist to wet soil. Our specimen came through the record cold winters with no apparent damage.

Calyptrocalyx leptostachys is a miniature palm which is very cold sensitive. It is a solitary palm with gorgeous emerging bifid leaves. Usually we would not offer a palm which is so cold sensitive but this palm is worth growing. I would not plant this palm in the ground unless you have a plan to protect it on cold nights. A fancy container in a conspicuous, shady location might be the best way to display this beauty.

Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society and Bromeliad Society of the Palm Beaches Schedule Joint June Ramble and Pot Luck Pool Party

Saturday, June 23, 2012

8:00 a.m. Tom Ramiccio's Nursery

9:00 a.m. Susie & Dante Cioci's Garden

10:00 a.m. Ruth & Terry Lynch's Garden and pool party

Please join us for this fun event and bring a covered dish, drink, or snacks to share. Directions and event flyer will be available at the June meeting.

Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society Membership

Annual membership is \$25 for an individual membership and \$35 for a dual membership (two people living at the same address) 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. Please go to www.palmbeachpalmsociety.com to obtain our membership application.

If you have questions about membership, you can contact Tom Whisler, our Membership Chairman, at (561) 627-8328 or at whisler.tom@synthes.com



Calypstrocalyx hollrugii (above) and *Calypstrocalyx leptostachys* (below) growing in the Beck garden.

(Photos by Charlie Beck)



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Cattleya gaskelliana orchid
growing on *Veitchia* stem