



# Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society

*Affiliate of the International Palm Society*

Monthly Update

August 2012

## FEATURED THIS MONTH: *Kerriodoxa elegans*



**ABOVE AND BELOW:** 18 year old *K. elegans* growing in the Beck garden.

*(Photos by Charlie Beck)*



**FRONT COVER:** *K. elegans* at Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden.

*(Photo by Charlie Beck)*

**Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society  
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VISIT US AT [www.palmbeachpalmcycadsociety.com](http://www.palmbeachpalmcycadsociety.com)

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**2012 Annual Picnic & Auction Scheduled**

Our annual picnic and most spectacular auction of the year is scheduled for September 8th in Ruth Sallenbach's fabulous garden. Ruth will open her gate at 8:30 a.m. Attendees are asked to bring a covered dish, salad, drinks, or desert to this pot luck picnic.

**Mark your calendar so you don't miss this exciting event.**

***Kerriodoxa elegans***  
by Charlie Beck

*Kerriodoxa elegans* is a solitary dioecious palm native to peninsular Thailand. It occurs in only two localities - Phuket and Khao Sok National Park. The latitude of its range is 8-9 degrees north which is well within the tropical limit of 23.5 degrees north. The palmate leaves can grow up to 8 feet in diameter. The leaves are circular and are shortly split. The spear leaf opens as it emerges from the bud unlike most palms that grow the spear leaf clear of the bud before opening. The leaf underside is silvery white and the unarmed petioles are deep purple or black. The stems are short and are sometimes subterranean. In habitat the stems can grow to 20 feet tall and measure 6-8 inches in diameter.

In habitat this palm grows at elevations of 300 to 1,000 feet in areas of high rainfall (100 to 130 inches/year). The underlying substrate is limestone but the topsoil is reported to be sandy and highly

acidic due to the leaf litter. The soil is well drained.

We have six specimens of *K. elegans* planted in our garden. Five were planted 18 years ago and one was planted 16 years ago. The oldest five were planted in a low lying area prone to flooding after repeated heavy rainfall. The youngest specimen was planted in a raised area of the garden. The youngest palm has outgrown the other five which leads me to believe that good soil drainage is advantageous. All six of our palms are planted in the shade. There is quite a range in growth rates. I gage growth rate by leaf size rather than stem height because it takes many years for stems to develop. Our largest leaf measures 5 1/2 feet in diameter. The smallest specimen's leaf measures just 2 1/2 feet in diameter. That's quite a variation for palms that are 16 to 18 years old. I assume that there is great amount of genetic variability within this species of palm. The lowest lying of our palms has the smallest leaves so good drainage is an important factor. We have also noticed a slight yellowing of the fronds at times. I have supplemented the fertilizer with extra iron and dolomite which has helped. I have not noticed any damage to our speci-

*(Continued on page 5)*

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"By appointment only"

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mens due to cold weather. Considering how close these palms grow to the equator, it is surprising how well they grow in sub-tropical areas.

The *K. elegans* planted at Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden have had a much faster growth rate than our plants. Those specimens are planted in limestone with excellent drainage. As you can see on the cover photo, those plants have produced several feet of stem and their leaves measure more than 8 feet across. I'm sure that those palms receive less fertilizer and irrigation than the ones in our garden but their growth rate is much better. If I were to plant a new specimen of *K. elegans*, I would amend the soil with pea gravel and

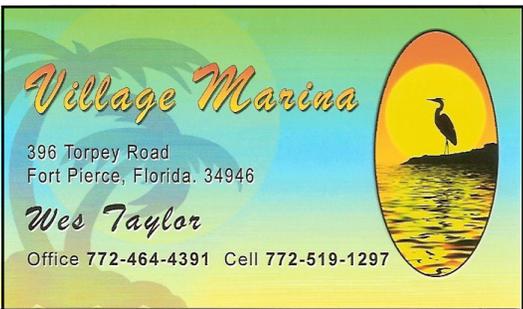
I would mound up the soil to improve drainage. Our palm society donated several specimens of *K. elegans* to the Mounts Botanical Garden. Those were planted on a steep incline on the south side of the lake. It will be interesting to see how these palms grow at that location.

The most beautiful specimen of *K. elegans* I've seen was at Norm Moody's garden (see photo on page 7). This palm had great color and huge leaves. I know Norm did not apply chemical fertilizer to his palms as recommended by IFAS. I do know that he did apply horse manure as a nutrient source. If you compare this practice to this palm's natural habitat, highly organic, acid sand over limestone, maybe the acidic horse manure was the cause of its robust growth.

I recommend all palm enthusiasts grow this palm. A healthy specimen is unmatched in beauty. The full circle leaves are an impressive sight. The leaf silver underside contrasts nicely with the near black petioles. Although the footprint of this palm can be large if well grown, it will never grow to an out-of-scale height. Our Palm and Cycad Society has purchased several of these palms for the year end palm give away. I hope you add to your collection with one of these palms.



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## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### GENERAL MEETING

Date: August 1, 2012  
 Time: 7:30 p.m.  
 Speaker: Lew & Cathy Burger  
 Subject: 2010 IPS Biennial to Rio De Janiero—Brazil  
 If there is sufficient time, they also have a video of Iguasu Falls  
 Location: Mounts Botanical Garden

### EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

Date: August 4, 2012  
 Time: 6:00 p.m.  
 Location: Tom & Mary Whisler's Home

### 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 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.palmbeachpalmcycadsociety.com](http://www.palmbeachpalmcycadsociety.com) to obtain our membership application.

Thank you for your support of the Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society. If you have questions about membership, you can contact Tom Whisler, our Membership Chairman, at (561) 627-8328 or at [whisler.tom@synthes.com](mailto:whisler.tom@synthes.com)



**ABOVE:** *K. elegans* growing in Townsville Palmetum, Townsville, Australia  
**BELOW:** *K. elegans* growing in Norm Moody's garden.

*(Photos by Charlie Beck)*



*Attalea* sp. Inflorescence  
*(Photo by Charlie Beck)*



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