



Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society

Affiliate of the International Palm Society

Monthly Update

January 2017

DECEMBER "THANK YOU"

Roland Grondin: Door

Richard Murray: for growing the give away plants

Ruth Lynch: for organizing the potluck dinner

Our sincere thanks to everyone who participated in our annual holiday party. We had so much fun, there was lots of great food and a wide selection of give away plants.

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Ruth Lynch, Refreshment Chair

UPCOMING MEETING

January 4, 2017

7:30 p.m.

At Mounts Botanical Garden

Speaker: Jeff Searle

Subject: 2016 International Palm Society Biennial

FEATURED AUCTION PLANTS:

See page 6

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: *Syagrus schizophylla*
by Charlie Beck

Syagrus schizophylla has a long history of name changes. Its previous genus classifications were *Cocos*, *Calappa*, *Arikuryroba*, and *Arikury*. Its common name is the Arikury Palm.

S. schizophylla is a small to medium sized palm. It's similar in size to the common *Adonidia merrillii* (Christmas Palm). Its pinnate fronds are held on upright, colorful petioles which have fibrous, serrated margins. The persistent petioles form a distinctive pattern on the stem. The regularly arranged leaflets are rigid and are held in a single plain. This is a solitary (rarely clustering) palm with an ultimate height of 13' (in nature). Stems measure 4 to 6" in diameter. Being monoecious, a single palm can produce viable seed. Globose fruit measure about 1" long and mature to a red-orange color. The endosperm is reported to be edible and taste like coconut.

S. schizophylla is native to the Atlantic coastline of Brazil. Native habitat ranges between the tropical latitudes of 10°S and 20°S. Much of its habitat extends along the ocean, so salt tolerance and wind resistance are high. Average annual rainfall in habitat is 60" which is similar to the 62" we receive in Palm Beach County (PBC). Native soils are similar to our sandy soil in PBC. This palm is frequently found growing on sand dunes. Habitat elevations range from sea level to low hills. This palm is most often found growing with full exposure to the sun. Considering its harsh native habitat, it's not surprising that it can survive planting in harsh situations or thrive in pampered home gardens.


We planted three *S. schizophylla* 23 years ago. That was the first year our garden was established. The three specimens were originally planted in full sun, but are presently growing under the canopy of taller, faster growing palms. They looked great with both light exposures. The fronds do lengthen a bit when grown in shade. This is not a fast growing palm, although it is a steady grower. This allows you appreciate its upright crown of leaves close to the ground. Our palms measure 19' tall in overall height, and 11' tall to the lowest green fronds. An attractive pattern of leaf bases persist. Petioles transition from dark brown at the stem to green by the leaflets. Our palms have set fruit for years. Seeds do sprout beneath the palms but not to the extent of being weedy. I haven't observed wildlife transporting seeds all over the garden.

With recommended fertilization and regular irrigation, our palms have never indicated any micro-nutritional deficiency. Ruth Sallenbach has many beautiful specimens thriving in her garden with once a year fertilization. I've seen *S. schizophylla* planted in harsh conditions and those palms looked acceptable, so this is clearly not a high maintenance palm.

Even though *S. schizophylla* grows in habitat on well drained sandy situations, our palms have been occasionally inundated for weeks at a time after repeated heavy rainfall. Our palms took those conditions in stride without any apparent negative effect.

(Continued on page 5)

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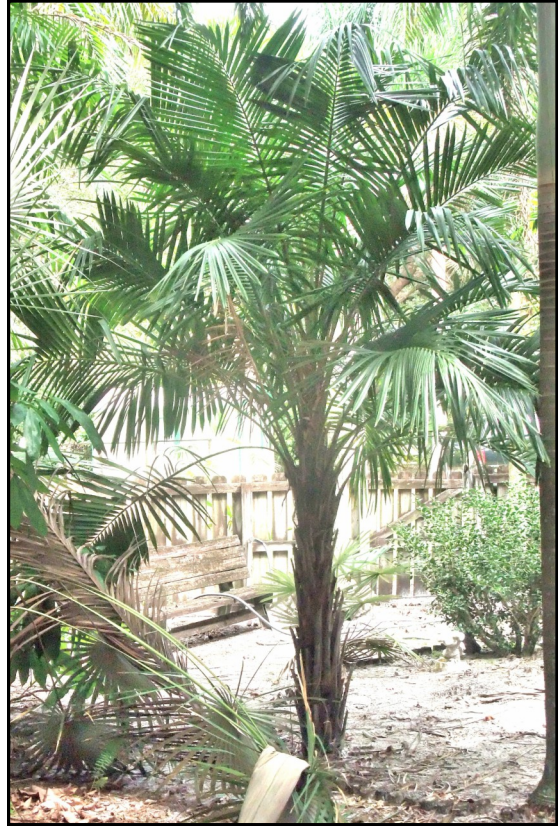
Wes Taylor

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Susan Cioci lends scale to *Syagrus schizophylla*
in Ruth Sallenbach's Garden



Syagrus schizophylla
in Ruth Sallenbach's Garden



Syagrus schizophylla petioles in the Beck Garden



Syagrus schizophylla
23 years old in the Beck Garden

2016 Holiday Party Fun



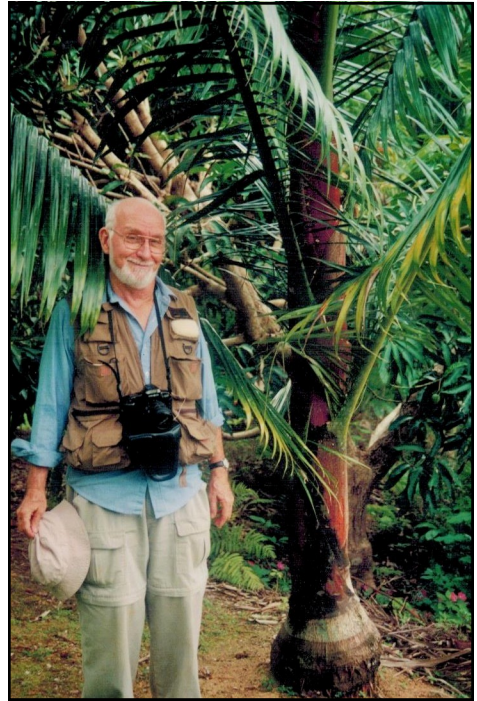
Bob Grimm, Ph.D, 1930-2016

I am sad to announce that Bob Grimm died of pneumonia just days after his 86th birthday. Bob was a retired Professor of Biology at FAU.

Bob was a charter member of our Palm Beach Palm and Cycad Society (PBPCS) and also an active member of the South Florida Palm Society (SFPS). Bob rarely ever missed PBPCS monthly meetings. When night time driving became a problem, he stopped attending meetings but continued his membership and often commented on society events and newsletters.

Years ago, the PBPCS formed work crews to help plant and maintain palms at the Ann Norton Sculpture Garden. Bob always donated his time in this effort. Bob also volunteered at the SFPS effort to propagate and plant palms at Zoo Miami. Over the years, when a valuable new palm book was published, Bob bought an extra copy to donate to PBPCS's Library. Both editions of *Genera Palmarum* and *An Encyclopedia of Cultivated Palms* are examples of his donations. In the past year Bob donated his complete library of plant books to our society for distribution to our members or addition to our library.

Bob was one of the kindest, thoughtful men that I have ever known and he will be missed.



Bob Grimm lending scale to *Dyopsis lasteliana* in Roth Garden, 2000 IPS Post Biennial Tour, Cairns, Australia

(*S. schizophylla* continued from page 2)

Considering this palm's tropical origin, you might assume that it is cold sensitive, but that is not the case. This palm is successfully grown in Central Florida and Southern California. I've never seen any damage due to winter cold spells. It should be cold hearty anywhere in PBC.

S. schizophylla was more commonly planted 30 years ago in PBC. It was often planted

in commercial settings. Shopping center parking lots and office building landscapes often included specimens of this tough little palm. This palm would be an excellent choice for roadside planting. It has a lot of positive attributes: medium size, light and moisture adaptable, and ability to survive unfertile sandy soil. It might be time to add this distinctive palm to your home landscape.

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Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society

Ramble

January 7, 2017

At Montgomery Botanical Garden Tour

11901 Old Cutler Rd, Coral Gables FL

We meet at the garden at 10:00 a.m. for a grand palm and cycad collection tour with Dr. Larry Noblick.

Following the tour, we will have a potluck
brunch at the Education House.

We hope everyone can make it.

Ruth & Terry Lynch

JANUARY AUCTION PALMS



Allagoptera caudescens



Carpoxyton macrospermum in the Holton Garden (Photos by Dale Holton)



NATURE NOTES - PALM LEAF SKELETONIZER

by Charlie Beck

The following insect life history was gleaned from a University of Florida IFAS Extension Factsheet.

Palm Leaf Skeletonizer causes unsightly leaf damage to a large variety of palms. The insect feeds only on palms. The damage begins when a palm-leaf skeletonizer moth (5/8" long) lays eggs on emergent fronds. Eggs hatch and caterpillars construct protective, dark tube-like structures on the bottom of the leaf. The caterpillars feed on the upper and lower leaf surfaces between the veins, so all that is left is the vein structure (skeleton) of the leaf. They deposit large quantities of unsightly brown fibrous excrement on the leaf surface. Several generations of this life cycle may occur in a year.

The IFAS Factsheet recommends homeowners control this insect by washing the fronds with a sponge or a water jet from a high pressure hose. For commercial growers and landscapers, they recommend various poisonous insecticides to control the problem. They noted that there are several biological controls but the parasitoids and parasites are not commercially available.

I have observed this kind of damage in our garden. It seems to come and go on specific palms but it's always present somewhere in the

garden. I know the damage is cosmetic and palms are tough enough to survive even the most severe infestation. I accept that this is a part of growing palms in a pesticide-free garden.

Sometimes researchers are so focused on traditional solutions of pest control, that they miss the big picture. Entomologists may be very effective at studying the life cycle of a pest, but might miss how that pest plays a role in the environment.

I recently noticed another biological control that was left out of the IFAS Factsheet. Lounging in our spa, I had full view of a mature *Pritchardia vuykstekeana*. This palm had quite a bit of damage from the Palm Leaf Skeletonizer, but not enough to destroy its beauty. The new

fronds were undamaged and the inflorescences were in full bloom with bright yellow flowers. One day I noticed a Yellowthroat Warbler flying to and from that palm. It landed on the bottom side of the frond and ate the caterpillars. It could only hold on upside down for a limited time so it flew back to a tree perch to rest. Then it repeated the process. I saw that bird cleaning that palm of caterpillars for three days straight. I was impressed with its tenacity.

Sometimes it's best to let insects remain part of the ecological system. All of the wildlife interrelationships are not fully understood- not even by the experts. Wood Warbler migration through Florida has been in steep decline over the past 30 years. You don't need to read research to convince yourself of this. All you need to do is observe nature. I now perceive Palm Leaf Skeletonizers in a new light - a smorgasbord for our migrating birds.



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"By appointment only"

2017 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOW DUE



Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society

Affiliate of the International Palm Society

Membership Application

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Y	

Please select one of the following options:

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