

GROWING
Calyptronoma rivalis
IN PALM BEACH COUNTY

Submitted by Charlie Beck

Calyptronoma rivalis is a solitary, medium sized palm. Its fronds are pinnate and are very graceful with slightly lax leaflets. This palm is monoecious and does not form a crownshaft. *C. rivalis* is native to the islands of Puerto Rico and Hispaniola. In native habitat it grows in wet places near streams and is considered quite rare. In habitat it grows to 45 feet tall and the stems measure 12 inches in diameter.

There are two other species recognized as *Calyptronoma*. These are *C. occidentalis* (native to Jamaica) and *C. plumeriana* (native to Cuba and Hispaniola). These both are slightly smaller than *C. rivalis* topping out at 35 feet tall with an 8 inch diameter stems. Both of these palms also grow in wet areas and are quite similar to *C. rivalis* in appearance. The main difference between these palms is in the floral characteristics.

We have three *C. rivalis* and a single specimen of *C. plumeriana* growing in our garden. Both species grow at a medium rate. In 8 years our tallest *C. rivalis* is 13 feet tall overall with a 7.5 inch diameter stem. Frond length is 8 feet. Our *C. plumeriana* is 17 years in the ground and is an overall height of 14 feet and the stem measures 9 inches in diameter. Frond length is 9 feet. The *C. rivalis* was affected by the record cold winters of 2009 and 2010. These palms were not badly damaged by the cold but they did grow a couple of stunted fronds which are still present on the palms. We grow our palms in low lying areas which are prone to flooding after repeated heavy rain falls.

Minor nutritional deficiencies have not surfaced except the *C. plumeriana* is currently recovering from a boron deficiency. The symptom of boron deficiency in this palm is a bending of the growing tip. This deficiency occurs rapidly so be vigilant if you grow this palm. Dr. Timothy Brochat has told us that boron is usually available in our soils but deficiency can occur after unusually heavy downpours. To cure boron deficiency the recommendation is mixing 2-4 oz. of Borax in 5 gallons of water and applying evenly to root zone. Repeat this at 5 month intervals.

Calyptronoma species are not commonly offered for sale. Our palm society has obtained two specimens of *Calyptronoma* for auction at one of our monthly meetings. We have one *C. rivalis* and one *C. plumeriana*.



Calyptronoma rivalis



Calyptronoma plumeriana recovering from boron deficiency
