

GROWING *Dypsis* IN PALM BEACH COUNTY

Submitted by Charlie Beck

Many *Dypsis* have become available within the last 10 years but some are not well-suited for growing in Palm Beach County. However, I have found that *Dypsis* palms which grow in white sand habitat in Madagascar do grow well here. Two of these have striking bamboo-like trunks – one white and one black. I'll share my growing experience with these beautiful small palms. No photos of these palm are shown in *Palms of Madagascar*.

Dypsis psammophila grows naturally in low canopy rainforest on coastal white sand in Madagascar. It is reported in

critical conservation status with a small distribution area. This palm is clustering and grows up to 12 feet tall. The stems emerge green but turn jet black as they age. My specimen was planted four years ago and does not appear to be an aggressive clumper so it will not consume a large area. The fronds are five feet long with thin leaflets. The tallest stem is just over one inch in diameter and is 5.5 feet tall. The ringed black stem rivals the beauty of any black bamboo I have ever seen.

Dypsis scottiana var. affinis also grows naturally on the white coastal sands of Madagascar. It was formerly named *Neophloga affinis* but was combined with *D. scottiana*. *D. scottiana var. affinis* looks very different from *D. scottiana* shown in *Palms of Madagascar*. *D. scottiana var. affinis* has up to 47 leaflets per side where *D. scottiana* has 11 to 19 much wider leaflets per side. My oldest specimen is seven years old. The stems are almost two inches in diameter and the oldest stems are eight feet tall. These palms reportedly grow to 12 feet tall. The stems are ringed and are chalky white which resemble a blue bamboo. The graceful arched fronds measure five feet long and have droopy leaflets that are very distinctive.

Both of these palms are readily available and are easy to grow in a shaded location. By planting these palms you can have the beauty of bamboo without the aggressive maintenance required with bamboo.

| GROWING CONDITIONS IN OUR GARDEN FOR <i>Dypsis psammophila</i> and <i>D. scottiana var. affinis</i> | |
|--|--|
| Location | 4 miles from ocean in suburban Lantana |
| Soil | Sand over a layer of hardpan (pineland flatwood habitat) |
| Irrigation | ¾ inch applied twice a week |
| Flooding | Periodic inundation in sandy soil acceptable |
| Fertilization | 3 times a year with Palm special analysis |
| Light | Shade |
| Micronutrient Deficiencies | None observed |
| Insect Damage | None observed |
| Hurricane Resistance | Good |

Dypsis psammophila



Dypsis scottiana var. *affinis*

