

GROWING *Hyophorbe indica* IN PALM BEACH COUNTY

Submitted by Charlie Beck

Hyophorbe indica is endemic to Réunion Island and grows in moist, low elevation forests. They are reported to be near extinction in the wild. Surprisingly, *Hyophorbe indica* DNA is closely related to *Wendlandiellia* which is native to the western Amazon. Other genera related to *Hyophorbe* are *Gaussia*, *Synechanthus*, and *Chamaedorea* – all new world palms.

Hyophorbe indica are self cleaning, pinnate, and monoecious (male and female flowers on the same plant). The leaves are arching and the inflorescence bud is hornlike. They reportedly grow to 30 feet in height. The crownshaft is an attractive deep green displayed on a gray ringed trunk.



GROWING CONDITIONS IN OUR GARDEN FOR <i>Hyophorbe indica</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	None
Fertilization	3 times a year with Palm special analysis
Light	Light shade
Micronutrient Deficiencies	None observed
Insect Damage	None observed
Hurricane Resistance	Good
Lethal Yellowing	Unknown

Hyophorbe indica is relatively new to South Florida palm enthusiasts. I don't remember this palm offered for sale prior to 1998. The first grouping I planted here in Palm Beach County died but my second try was successful. I planted these palms on a berm to eliminate periodic inundation during the rainy season. My specimens are now nine years old. (See photographs on page 2.) They have six feet of trunk which measures 5 ¼ inches in diameter at waist height. They are blooming this year for the first time. The leaves are strongly arched and measure seven feet long. I have not noticed any nutritional deficiencies or cold damage. I grow these in light shade, but I'll bet these palms would grow equally well in full sun.

Plant this palm for its medium size, self cleaning arching fronds, and striking deep green crownshaft. I don't believe many are growing in Palm Beach County.



Hyophorbe indica



Hyophorbe indica
horn-like inflorescence bud

Closely related *Hyophorbe* Cousins



Hyophorbe lagenicaulis
(bottle palm)



Hyophorbe verschaffeltii
(spindle palm)