

GROWING
Licuala ramsayi
IN PALM BEACH COUNTY

Submitted by Charlie Beck

Of all the *Licualas* I have grown, I believe *Licuala ramsayi* is the most impressive of those which grow well in Palm Beach County. *Licuala grandis* is a beautiful palm that is easy to grow but is much smaller. *Licuala peltata* is larger but is finicky here in Palm Beach County. I have lost five of the six I have planted. However, I have had a 100 percent success rate growing the grand *Licuala ramsayi*. I have two specimens growing on high ground and four others growing in low-lying wet areas. They are all growing well and have never shown any cold damage or minor element deficiencies. The two largest specimens (Fig. C on page 15) have been in the ground for 15 years and are five to six feet tall with 40 inch diameter leaves on 36 inch long petioles. The fact that these are slow growing is a positive trait because the beautiful crown is best appreciated up close.

GROWING CONDITIONS FOR <i>LICUALA RAMSAYI</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	Deep shade
Micronutrient Deficiencies	None observed
Insect Damage	None observed
Hurricane Resistance	Good

Licuala ramsayi is endemic to northeast Queensland, Australia. They grow in low swampy rain forest. Most of their life they are in deep shade but with great age become emergent. They have been reported to grow up to 60 feet tall. In habitat, leaves can measure up to six feet in diameter on six foot long petioles. Leaves are divided into wedge-shaped segments.

Brenda and I were lucky to participate in the 2000 IPS Post-Biennial trip to Queensland, Australia and observed these palms growing in habitat. At Mission Bay we saw a dense stand of 30+ foot *Licuala ramsayi* (Figure A on page 2). We were told that these palms were several hundred years old. The effect was that of standing in a cathedral of palms. We also saw well-grown specimens in Flecker Garden (Figure B on page 15) also located in Queensland.



Figure A These photographs are of *Licuala ramsayi* growing in habitat at Mission Bay in Australia. These photographs were taken in 2000.



Figure B: *Licuala ramsayi* at Flecker Botanic Gardens in Australia.



Licuala ramsayi leaf on specimen growing in Palm Beach County.



Licuala ramsayi
at Mission Bay in Australia



Figure C: *Licuala ramsayi* specimen growing in Palm Beach County.
(yardstick in foreground)