

**WORLD CHAMPION**  
*Roystonea oleracea*  
**PALMS IN NEW CALDONIA**

*Submitted by Charlie Beck*

In 2000, I attended the International Palm Society Biennial meeting in New Caledonia. New Caledonia is located in tropical Southwest Pacific, 750 miles east of Australia and 950 miles north of New Zealand. There are 37 species of palms endemic to New Caledonia. Of the 37 native species, I photographed 25 growing in habitat, but what I would like to share with you are photographs of a planting of non-native palms. Many years ago, a grouping of *Roystonea oleracea* was planted. This species is the largest of the Royal Palms and native to the Caribbean and South America. These palms were magnificent. They measured 160 feet tall. Due to the lack of cyclone activity in New Caledonia, these palms grew to a record height. In its native habitat, these palms top out at 120 feet tall.

Biennial participants were treated to a catered dinner served outdoors beside these palms. A stage was set up and a live classical music concert accompanied dinner. Generators were brought to this remote location and up-lighting was provided for night time viewing of these majestic palms.



*Roystonea oleracea* palms growing in New Caledonia. Note the size of the individuals on the photograph to the right to appreciate the scale of these fantastic palms.

*(Photo by Charlie Beck)*