

THE MERWIN CONSERVANCY Announces the Preservation of the MERWIN PALM FOREST

When W.S. Merwin, a Pulitzer Prize-winning U.S. Poet Laureate and resident of Maui, Hawaii, came upon a parcel of land in the small valley of Pe'ahi Stream in the late 1970's, he found an agricultural wasteland with the soil decimated and eroded by a failed pineapple plantation. Merwin set about a nearly 40-year journey to give back to the land, cultivating and creating a lush botanical garden, which today has become a dense forest of palm trees.

By the numbers: 19 acres, 2,741 palm trees, over 400 taxonomic species, more than 125 unique genera, 800 horticultural varieties

"The Merwin Conservancy is proud to stand today with the Hawaiian islands Land Trust, Copper Canyon Press and the Merwin Family to announce the permanent protection of the Merwin Palm Collection, saving the palms and the land from any future development, forever," said Conservancy Executive Director, Jason Denhart.

Established in 2010, The Merwin Conservancy recently completed a years-long project with the National Tropical Botanical Garden and world-renowned palm expert, Dr. John Dransfield of the Royal Botanical



W.S.

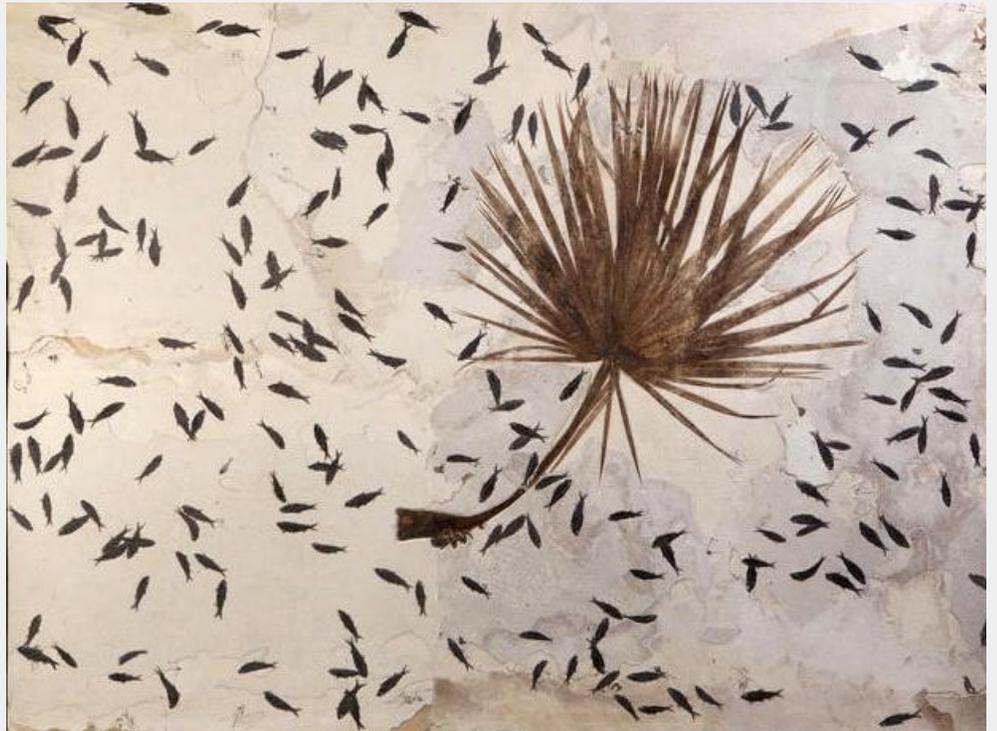
Merwin and his wife Paula in their Maui garden; photos and text sourced from The Merwin Conservancy

Gardens Kew, to identify, tag, catalog and map each and every palm tree within the Merwin Collection. A scientific database has now been created featuring detailed taxonomic information about each individual palm specimen, as well as its exact location within the forest using Global Positioning Systems and Google Earth technology. This database and the palm collection will eventually be made available to the academic and botanical community for the future scientific study of the palm species. To learn more, or donate, visit: www.merwinconservancy.org

To subscribe, email:
info@palms.org

Palms Preserved in Stone

A fossil is a preserved remnant or impression of a living organism trapped in layers of sedimentary rock. Plant fossils are rare compared to skeletal or shell fossils due to the more delicate nature of plant material. All fossils are said to be at least 10,000 years old, more often much older. Enjoy these images of ancient palm leaves shared by an anonymous collector. No information was given about the origin or history of the fossils, but many areas of the world are rich with fossil records. cursory research suggests these examples may come from the Green River Formation in Wyoming, U.S. If so, these may date from 45 to 50 million years ago, the Eocene period, though they may easily have come from similar sites in Ethiopia. Viewing these images, one can visualize a dense stand of palms beside a lake, silent but for the prehistoric birds squawking in the trees. The old fronds falling, dislodged by gravity and a soft breeze, drift downward, sinking slowly to the silty lake bottom, eventually to be covered by layer upon layer of sand and fine mud for thousands upon thousands of years.



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Bentinckia nicobarica at New Farm Park, below left. Right, *Dypsis lastelliana*, also at New Farm Park.



Affiliate News...

Brisbane Palm and Cycad Society

September - October 2014

Last Outing: Unfortunately the weather turned against us and the day was cool and gloomy. A small group of die-hards ventured out and were treated to an informative tour of Roma Street Parkland by Greg Smith, who supplied the design and plants for the palm section of the garden. The growth there has been phenomenal and is a credit to the gardeners who maintain this public garden.

After touring the Parkland, we drove over to New Farm Park to look at the plantings of less common palm species there, as suggested by John Woodbridge. We were treated to quite a surprise, finding some healthy examples of some less commonly planted palms.

For contact information and more photos, please [CLICK HERE](#).



Left, *Salacca wallichiana*, Ray Hernandez at a respectful distance; right, *Normanbya normanbyi* with President Lucinda McCartney for scale. Photos by Maryann Krisovitch.

Central Florida Palm and Cycad Society

September 2014

June Meeting Report: CFPACS Goes to Leu

On a hot and sunny day in June, the Society returned to Leu Gardens in Orlando. It had been about six years since our last visit and there have been many changes. With over 50 CFPACS members in attendance, Palm Master Eric Schmidt began by telling us the history of the garden and the Leu family. Also joining us on our tour was Leu Gardens' Executive Director, Robert Bowden. The Gardens have been a wonderful supported of CFPACS and we greatly appreciate their hospitality. Several times a year, Eric provides us with palms he has propagated to sell at our meeting auctions.

Although Leu Gardens has an extensive palm and cycad area, our tour wound through nearly the entire garden as Eric has inserted palms and cycads into various locations. Cameras were snapping all over! We noted a beautiful Rakum Palm, *Salacca wallichiana* (Fig 1) which is a spiny clustering palm reaching 4-6 feet. It bears large scaly fruit that are sweet and edible. The Rakum prefers moist fertile soil and shade or partial sun. It is native to southeast Asia..

The Palm Garden contains over 250 species of palms. Many are cold hardy for the central Florida area. Some will be injured in a severe freeze but will recover. Many of the palms are being evaluated for cold-hardiness. This information is being shared with landscape professionals and homeowners alike in hopes of expanding the palette of palms used in the Florida landscape.

For continued commentary, contacts, and more photos, please [CLICK HERE AND SCROLL DOWN THE PAGE](#).



Cycas scratchleyana – the only one in North America and from wild collected seed. Sunken Gardens, St.Petersburg, Florida

Message to IPS Members and Affiliates Concerning the Affiliate News from Mike Merritt

I have been tasked by the IPS President to develop an electronic version of the news of IPS Affiliates similar to the printed version presented by the late Jim Cain. Reviewing Jim's work, it is clear that Jim reported on past events (that had already occurred), but rarely included upcoming meeting announcements. Jim also usually included some general information about the Affiliate and a list of officers with their contact information.

Many Affiliates are quite diligent at posting announcements about upcoming meetings or events in the Affiliate News Section of Palmtalk, but reports of past events and activities are a lot harder to come by,

even when one is a member of four societies, as I am, and receive electronic newsletters from all of them. I have received only a few reports from other groups.

So, I am flagging a need here for reports in electronic form from more Affiliates. Like Jim, I believe that it is important that Affiliate groups receive some international exposure for their efforts. Contact information is also important so that communications can be established when needed.

Please note that use of PalmTalk for Affiliate reports permits the use of photos, as is amply illustrated in this month's selection of reports. Although I haven't actually tried it yet, it should be possible to include Spanish or French versions to accompany English versions. Perhaps even Chinese, Japanese, or Hindi versions could be done. It would be fun to try.

Presently, it is something of a chore to upload reports within the present PalmTalk engine. The basic problem is the lack of capability for directly uploading Word or Acrobat files. A lot of cutting and pasting needs to be done (although I am happy to do it). Text and pictures can be uploaded, albeit somewhat indirectly, and text usually needs to be reformatted. However, it is hoped that the new Website engine under construction will make the addition of reports much easier. Perhaps it could even be done directly from the Affiliate without having to go through an intermediary.

Nevertheless, the need for a process of receiving and organizing reports will remain. For the present, **please send reports to Mike Merritt, merritt4154@gmail.com**, and I will do my best to assist.

SHARE THE EXCITEMENT OF PALMS -- FORWARD THIS NEWSLETTER TO A FRIEND!