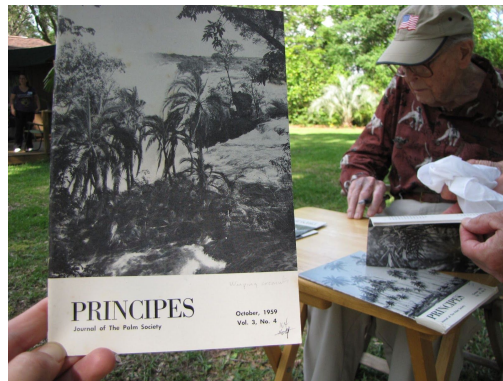




## Dr. Walter Hodge

Second President of the IPS 1957 - 1960

By Andrew Street



Dr. Walter H. Hodge shown autographing issues of *Principes* from 1959, and with friend Dr. Thomas Mignerey.

I am sure some of you reading this may never have heard of Dr. Walter Hodge, and that's partly why this piece was written. Surely any man who lives to be over 100 has some stories to tell, but Dr. Hodge was not significant for his age alone; no—he lived the life many of us long for. He was a plant explorer.

Dr. Hodge wrote over 200 publications and was an accomplished photographer of many subjects. Famous for his botanical adventures to the tropics, Walter has several species of plant named after him, including an *Anthurium*, a bromeliad, and even a species of crane fly he brought back from Dominica and gave to an entomologist friend for study. Dominica was his first trip, taken back in 1938. Dr. Hodge had an interest in plant economics just as much as the plants themselves; his photographs and work show this fascination with the relationships between people and plants.

Dr. Hodge grew up in New England, where he was educated, ultimately attaining a Ph.D. from Harvard University in Biology. Dr. Hodge also met his wife, Barbara, during his high school years in Massachusetts. Barbara often accompanied her husband on his travels. Throughout his career she was instrumental to him; with her love of art and archaeology, she inspired and assisted in his botanical work, adding an artistic zest to what can be tedious work. During World War II, Dr. Hodge was assigned an important task of finding an alternative plant for deriving an anti-malaria medicine. He searched in Peru where the genus *Cinchona* is native; the trees in this genus are the main sources for quinine. This alkaloid has been used for centuries for its medical properties, including fighting malaria.




With the exception of a couple details, all of the above can be lifted from the internet; how important he was in the world of plants seems pretty obvious. What I couldn't easily find online was where did palms fit in—where did palms rank, for him, in his overall love of plants? In order to gain greater insight into Dr. Hodge's love for palms, I was able to make contact with Dr. Tom Mignerey, past president of a local chapter of the International Palm Society, in Pensacola. It turns out he met Dr. Hodge and his wife in 1997, when Dr. Hodge was 84 years old, and he and Barbara relocated to the Florida Panhandle. Dr. Mignerey had looked him up on the IPS registry.

*Continued next page*

Dr. Hodge and Barbara became regular attendees and supported the society and their local publication, Fan and Feather, for many years. Dr. Hodge drove into his 90's, until he could no longer do so. From that point, Dr. Mignerey would pick them up and take them to the palm society meetings. Barbara passed away a few years before Dr. Hodge. Tom still came to visit Walter a few times after that, to have lunch and take him to the beach. Dr. Walter Hodge passed away in Pensacola on June 13, 2013. He lived to be over 100 years old.

Dr. Mignerey was instrumental in showing me that Dr. Hodge's love for palms never died. He loved them to the very end. But what about earlier in life? Well, just like Dr. Mignerey looked up Dr. Hodge, I decided to do the same. I began to search for his work in the archives of the IPS. This was where I found a unique admiration and respect for what we all love—the palm tree.

Dr. Hodge was the second president of the International Palm Society and during the late 50's and 60's he wrote many articles for the journal. Reading his articles, it is apparent how appreciative he was for these unique monocots. His perspective was one of almost amazement for these plants. For a Massachusetts native, seeing one for the first time must have been an important experience. Growing up with palms can cause a person to overlook all palms, dismissing them as a "coconut tree." Dr. Hodge had a deep appreciation for palms; certainly as handsome subjects in the landscape, but more so the close relationship palms and humans have and have had for hundreds or thousands of years— that symbiosis in which organisms flourished was what was most important to him...

<p>Vol 17, No. 1 January 1973</p>  <p><b>PRINCIPES</b> Journal of The Palm Society</p> <p>January, 1973 Vol. 17, No. 1</p> <p>The head of the Ecuadorian liberator, Sucre, carved from a single seed of the tagua palm, source of Photo by Walter H. Hodge</p>	 <p>69. Weeping coconut, Botanic Garden, Suva, Fiji Islands. Photo by W. H. Hodge.</p>	<p>1979   HODGE: PALMS ON GOLD   85</p>  <p>1. One of two gold cups from Greece, this one showing a probable date palm in low relief.</p> <p><i>Principes</i>, 23(2), 1979, p. 85</p> <p><b>PALM BRIEFS</b> <b>Palms Featured on Gold of Ancient Greece</b></p> <p>Some years ago a pair of gold cups of Minoan workmanship (dated ca. 1500-1400 B.C.) were found in a grave at Vaphio in the southern Peloponnese of Greece. These became known to art historians as the "Vaphio cups" and are prized pieces in the museum in Athens. The cups measuring about 3 1/2 inches high were made by fastening an inner smooth gold plate to an outer one decorated in low relief (repoussé). The design of the latter features a bull hunt. On one cup the bulls are grazing; on the other (partially illustrated here) three bulls are being captured in nets.</p> <p>Of interest to <i>PRINCIPES</i> readers is the fact that three trees, which appear to be date palms (<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i>), were included in the design by the ancient gold worker. One of these is to be seen in the present photograph, made of a copy of the original cup.</p> <p>W. H. HODGE Trumansburg, N.Y.</p> <p><b>Seed Bank Notes</b></p> <p>Lois Rossten succeeds Lucita Wait and DeArmand Hull as agent for The Palm Society Seed Bank. Correspondence concerning seeds or seeds themselves should be sent to Mrs. K. Rossten, 6561 Melbourne Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92647, USA.</p>
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*From the early pages of PRINCIPES, written and photographic contributions of Dr. Walter H. Hodge.*

During my search, Dr. Mignerey's insight helped me to see the influence Dr. Hodge's wife had on him and his work. Barbara's love for archaeology met with Dr. Hodge's appreciation for palms in nearly every trip they took together. Two separate pictures illustrate this perfectly, with the interesting political figure carving from a palm seed, and the note of a date palm in the art of a golden cup from Greece—these two artifacts intrigued both, in a way that must have been romantic.

His love for all things palm carried his spirits during his travels in the tropics. When in Bermuda, He loved the endemic *Sabal*. When describing what many would consider an ugly duckling to the palm world, he conveyed an appreciation for what the palm was to him—a survivor and thriver on one of the most challenging and demanding islands in the Atlantic..

The utility of the palm in what he perceived as paradise was obvious, and for Dr. Hodge, that was a huge reason to love palms. Like grains and other crops, you could harvest palm seed, heart and fruit— and on the same scale. But unlike the other crops, you could also build your house with palm; thatch from the fronds and palm trunks for building material are often all that's needed for a working home. With Dr. Hodge's background in economically important crops, it must have been both refreshing and impressive for one group of plants to have so many uses. We often think of palms as ornamentals, but Dr. Hodge thought of them as a vital crop, textile, and building material, before he thought about them lining a driveway. It is, however, this perfect fit — economic and ornamental use — that made for a lasting love of palms. Whether it was art, carved from a palm seed, or sap tapped from a 60 foot coconut, no use was lost on him. 🍷 End

**For further reading:** [Hunt Institute](#), [JStor.org](#), [PRINCIPES article](#), [Bermuda's Palmetto](#), [Royal Palm Promenades](#), [Palm Cabbage](#), and [Biography](#), [PalmTalk](#). You may have to log in to palms.org to view some articles.



## *Calamus pygmaeus*



The more or less stemless *Calamus pygmaeus* is one of the smallest of all rattans, restricted to Kubah National Park in Sarawak (visited during the 2016 Biennial), where it was first collected and described by Odoardo Beccari in the 1860s. It has a remarkable method of vegetative reproduction. The long slender whip-like inflorescences bend over and root at their tips, developing into new shoots. This dainty rattan can cover extensive areas of the forest undergrowth, the colonies comprising many shoots, all originating from a single plant. (John Dransfield)

El *Calamus pygmaeus*, más o menos sin tallo, es uno de los ratanes más pequeños que existen. Localizado en el Kubah National Park de Sarawak (Visitado durante la Bienal 2016), donde fue visto por primera vez y descrito por Odoardo Beccari en el año 1.860. Tiene un remarcable método de reproducción vegetativa. Su larga y esbelta rama, como inflorescencias se dobla y hecha raíces en sus puntas, desarrollándose estas en nuevos brotes. Este delicado ratan puede cubrir extensas zonas de matorrales en el bosque, que forman colonias compuestas por muchos brotes, todos originados por una sola planta. (Gracias a Paco Marti para la traducción)



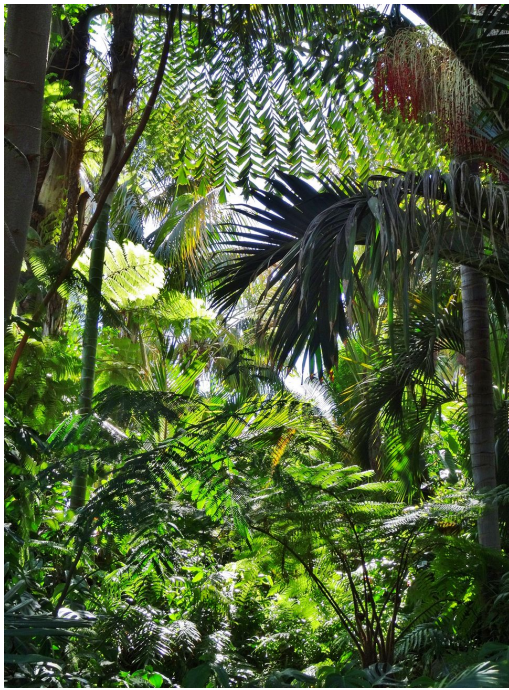
[The Palm Society of Southern California Tours “Cuesta Linda”](#)

All photography Copyright © 2016 by Ando P.

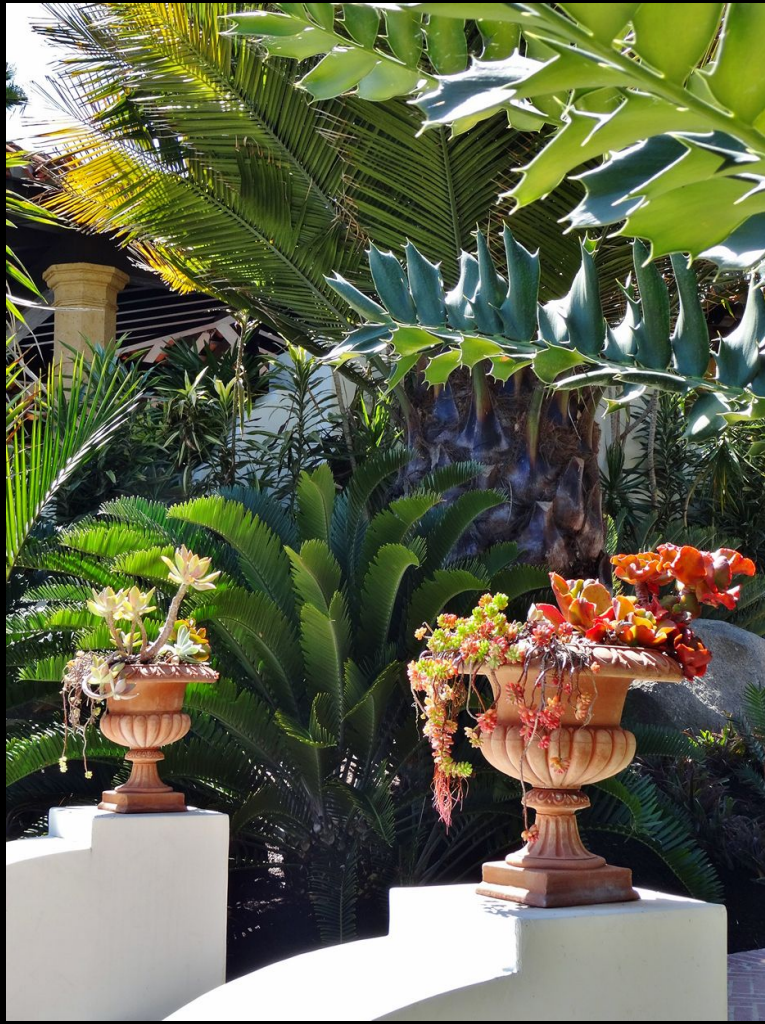
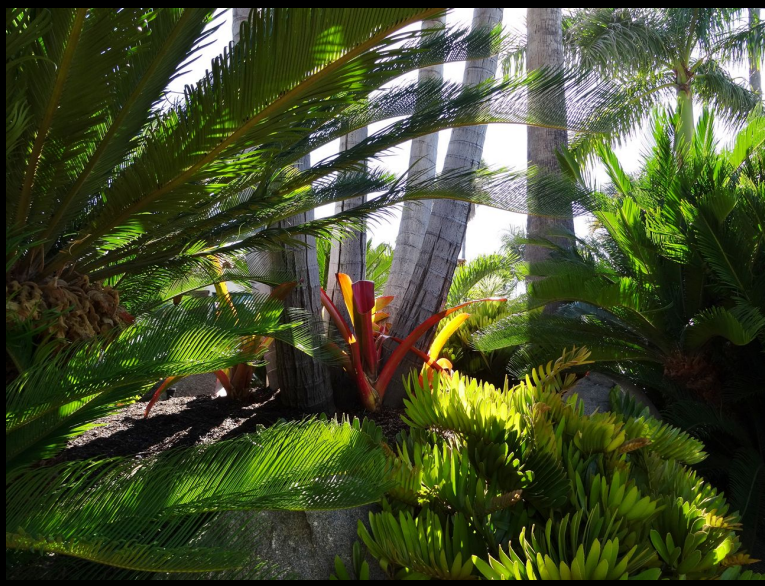


**From photographer Ando P.:** The Palm Society of Southern California held its latest meeting on September 17, 2016 at the estate of Jeff and Christine Brusseau in Vista, California. This stunning 2-acre property is filled with over 2000 different species of plants, all of them receiving constant care and meticulous attention.

**From Jeff Brusseau:** This garden, like most, is a work in progress and we find great joy designing, installing, studying and maintaining the extensive plant palette. We are blessed with an exceptional microclimate and soil and have done our best to choose complimentary plants that will excel in our garden. Thanks to all that have visited either in person or by way of the photos, and shared in the experience of Cuesta Linda!







For many, many more  
fabulous photos of this  
special event, please visit :

[CUESTA LINDA](http://CUESTA LINDA)



## Are You Missing Out on the Excitement of Discovery on Twitter?

All photos and content courtesy of Dr. Lauren Gardiner, @IbuAnggrek, RBG Kew



Follow us on Twitter: [@IPS\\_PalmSociety](https://twitter.com/IPS_PalmSociety)

## Announcement - Reprinted from PALMS

In line with the rising costs of journal production and distribution, IPS membership dues will increase, the first increase in many years. Effective January 1, 2017, the new membership rates will be as follows:

Annual Individual Membership \$55.00

Three Year Membership \$150

Institutional/Library Subscription \$55.00

A recent meeting of the IPS Board of Directors identified the crucial need for enlisting the support of donors in order to ensure the continued survival of the organization. While the IPS accepts donations at any level, the Board identified three levels of giving that will be recognized in a published acknowledgement of major benefactors: Silver \$500.00, Gold \$1,000.00 and Platinum \$5,000.00.

Furthermore, the IPS is seeking sponsors for each issue of PALMS. Sponsors, which may be individuals, families or organizations, will be acknowledged in the issues they underwrite. The cost of sponsorship is \$7,000.00. If you wish to give to the IPS, please contact IPS President Ray Hernandez at [subtropicrofancer@hotmail.com](mailto:subtropicrofancer@hotmail.com) or IPS Treasurer Dr. Tom Jackson at [JacksoT@sutterhealth.org](mailto:JacksoT@sutterhealth.org) or use the "Donate" button on [www.palms.org](http://www.palms.org).

Thank you!

## Are you social? Visit IPS Social Media:

Visit the new INTERACTIVE FaceBook Group: [International Palm Society Community](#)

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Visit the discussion board to ask questions about palms: [www.palmtalk.org](http://www.palmtalk.org)

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Comments, questions? Contact: [info@palms.org](mailto:info@palms.org)

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