



THE INTERNATIONAL PALM SOCIETY

June 2022

NEWSLETTER

The October 1967 issue of *Principes* (now *PALMS*) introduced a new feature entitled “Garden Tour.” The inaugural garden was Madam Ganna Walska’s “Lotusland.” Over fifty years later, private garden tours remain an exclusive and cherished perk for our members.

During the 2021 IPS interim meeting, attendees were fortunate to be treated to superb private garden tours in greater Sarasota, Florida. This month, we have photos from the tour of Rob Branch’s garden, and next month, we’ll see Faith Bishock’s amazing retreat.



The Rob Branch Garden

Most our members agree, palms are the second most enjoyable aspect of membership in the International Palm Society. It’s really the people that make our society so special. Rob Branch is a wonderful example of the new friends one might encounter in the most exotic locations. I first met Rob in the wee hours of the morning, bleary-eyed after a transoceanic flight, at the Changi airport in Singapore (while en route to Borneo for the 2016 biennial). We quickly became friends and spent the first afternoon together (along with my wife) in Sarawak, crossing the river and exploring the orchid garden. Predictably, Rob is a genuine palm-nut, but what struck me was his enthusiasm for all tropical plants. This is one of the reasons I love traipsing through the jungle beside him. Watching him scurry off the trail to embrace an aroid in habitat (that nobody else noticed) is always a delight. I knew that Rob had a legendary aroid collection (along with palms) and had long wished for a visit to his garden. Well, that day finally arrived, and I was enthralled.

The Rob Branch Garden



Upper Left: Rob (center, white T-shirt, with back to camera) leading the tour. Please note the aptly named, albeit historically spelled, street...Cocoanut*.

*From Merriam Webster:

“Cocoanut is rarely used in contemporary texts, the shift to coconut prompted by a need to distinguish the word from Cocoa nut” (the archaic name for the cacao nut, which ironically is not even a nut).

Upper Right: Rob standing deservedly proud (and providing scale) by his *Ptychosperma sandermanum* (“undivided form”), rarely seen in cultivation.

Left: The same palm, *Ptychosperma sandermanum* with undivided leaves.

The Rob Branch Garden



Upper Left: Rob definitely got a kick out of watching the IPS Board of Directors marveling at his extraordinary collection of big-leaf tropical plants.

Upper Right: Rob's dual passions: aroids and palms (in this case *Thaumatophyllum* sp. and *Satakentia liukiensis*).

The Palms

Left: *Hydriastele beguinii*, Obi Island form

The Rob Branch Garden



The Palms, continued

Upper Left: I just cannot walk by *Pelagodoxa henryana* without taking a photo.

Upper Right: Rob's *Sabinaria magnifica*, a happy reminder of our society's efforts on behalf of *ex-situ* conservation.

Right: *Wallichia oblongifolia* flowering.



The Rob Branch Garden

The Aroids

Right: *Monstera acacoyaguensis*, a nomadic vine with showy, fenestrated leaves.

Lower Left: The enormous leaves of *Anthurium faustomirandae*

Lower Right: *Epipremnum pinnatum* (Cebu Blue), a cultivar that is much loved by aroid aficionados on Instagram.



The Rob Branch Garden



Other Plants

Upper Left: *Drynaria (Aglaomorpha) coronans* (the Snake-Leaf Fern), photobombed by a *Licuala* leaf below.

Upper Right: *Macaranga grandifolia*.

Right: *Cycas debaoensis*, a cycad from China, with its extraordinary, bipinnatifid leaves.



The Rob Branch Garden



Bonding over palms, Rob and IPS director Susan Hubbell (who organized the fabulous 2021 mid-term). Background *Hyophorbe verschaffeltii*.

Rob even supplied parting gifts: cuttings of *Monstera acacoyaguensis*. (L to R: Arlene Hurwitz, Rob, your humble editor, and Gregg Hamann).



International Palm Society's Hawaiian Islands Biennial

You still have time to register for the International Palm Society's 32nd biennial in the islands of Hawaii. Don't miss your chance to visit private tropical gardens, botanical collections, nurseries, and natural areas in the company of fellow IPS members from all over the world. Evening lectures will make this event informative as well as enjoyable. This will be an unforgettable event. Don't miss it!

[IPS BIENNIAL INFO](#)

The Maui Pre-Biennial Tour

Each of the Hawaiian islands has its own unique character. So why not arrive early for the biennial and get your feet wet on Maui before heading to the big city of Honolulu?

Maui is known for its beaches and none is more famous than Ka'anapali Beach. Our hotel is right on the white sands of Ka'anapali Beach – just a few steps from Black Rock, one of Maui's best snorkel spots. Settle in on your first afternoon with a dip in the ocean or the pool before meeting at the beachside Hui Hui restaurant for a hosted dinner at sunset.

You will also get to see hidden, invitation-only places on the wilder, wetter side of Maui, including:

- The rare palm collection of Jerry and Robin Welch
- The salvaged sugar mill machinery in the Sewell sculpture garden
- The contemplative palm forest of the W.S. Merwin Conservancy

Additionally, you'll have plenty of time to do what you like on the island, from water play to boat trips to bird watching. There are excellent restaurants within walking distance of the hotel, and you can make a night of it and have the quintessential Hawaii experience at the Old Lahaina Luau.

Joining the Maui Pre-Tour guarantees you will hit the ground running when you meet up with the rest of the biennial crowd in Honolulu! There are only a few spots left, so book your trip-before-the-trip today!

[MAUI PRE-TOUR INFO](#)



New Benefactor Member

On behalf of the IPS Board of Directors, we extend a welcome and heartfelt thanks to our newest member at the Benefactor level.

Richard Loy, Australia



***Pritchardia* in Hawaii by Donald R. Hodel**

Pritchardia* in Hawaii: *Pritchardia gordonii

The relatively recently named *Pritchardia gordonii* is one of the rarest *loulou* and is restricted to only 23 mature plants on the unusually steep slopes of Honopue Valley in the Kohala Mountains in the northwestern section of the island of Hawaii (Big Island). Also, it is one of the tallest *loulou*, growing to over 65 ft (20 m) in height, and has leaf blades green above and below, inflorescences that nearly equal the leaves, and among the largest fruits in the genus.



***Pritchardia* in Hawaii**



Parting Shot

The Rob Branch garden is a fine exemplar of what one may expect when visiting notable private gardens. Typically, palms will be the bedrock of any IPS member's landscaping, however generally we are fond of a broad range of tropical horticulture. Don't be surprised to have experts in cycads, aroids, succulents, ferns, bromeliads, heliconias, and orchids conveniently by your side while touring these gardens.

IPS member and bon vivant Elvis Cruz feigning distaste for a non-palm, a picture-perfect (and trunking) cycad, *Lepidozamia peroffskyana*.

