

# NEWSLETTER

## How Poet W.S. Merwin Found Paradise by Planting Palm Trees



In the late 1970s, the renowned poet W.S. Merwin bought three acres of an old pineapple plantation in Hawaii -- a "paradise lost," where little would grow due to deforestation and chemicals leftover in the soil. Little by little, he and his wife began planting trees, and the garden grew into a whole forest of palms from seeds collected around the world. Jeffrey Brown visits Merwin's garden in Maui.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW VIDEO](#)

Our co-editor, John Dransfield, who was involved in the census and naming of the palms in the Merwin Conservancy comments: This is one of the most exciting and beautiful palm gardens I have ever visited. Here are palms growing in conditions very similar to their rain forest homes and for this reason they have taken on a majestic aspect. Planted densely, the palms present a bewildering and wonderful diversity of shape, texture and botanical identity. It is also an astonishingly peaceful garden, with only birdsong and the sound of the Trade Winds in the tree canopy. As palms mature and flower and can thus be named, we can expect the total number of critically named palm species planted by William Merwin to increase dramatically. Already this is one of the richest and most beautiful collections of palms





Above left, appreciate the density of growth in this general shot of the palm forest. How many species do you see? Above right, Dr. John Dransfield engulfed by *Kerriodoxa*. You may have noticed sundry orange and red tape, tied to trees or hanging from their waists - this was for temporary naming of palms, all now replaced with neat unobtrusive permanent labels. Left: Jatmi Dransfield, Dave Lorene (NTBG) and Olin Erickson (William's gardener)

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



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**Internat. Palm Soc.** @IPS\_PalmSociety · Mar 7

A beautifully illuminated shot of *Rhopalostylis sapida*, the Nikau palm of New Zealand for your Eye-Candy Saturday [flic.kr/p/9hX7vF](https://www.flickr.com/photos/ips_palm_society/14181111111/)

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**Rhopalostylis sapida - Nikau Palm in West Coast Temperate Rainforest...**

Did you know....? The international Palm Society sends out tweets on Twitter! Enjoy the Saturday Eye Candy photos every week.



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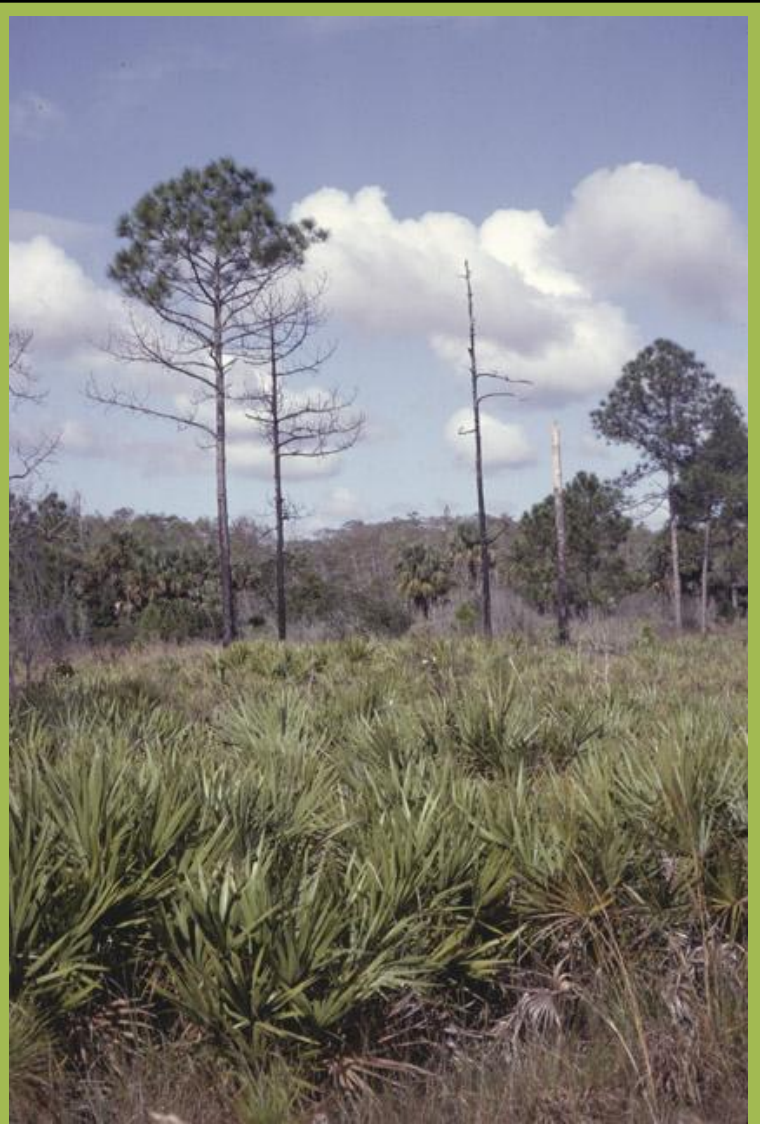
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## **News from Archbold Biological Station**

We all think we know the Saw Palmetto *Serenoa repens* which occurs in almost ALL Florida uplands. But a report by Linda Duever on the 'Ecology and Management of Saw Palmetto' with Archbold contributions reminds us how little we know. Did you know most palmetto biomass exists belowground with massive rhizomes to store carbohydrates ([Abrahamson 2009](#)). Understanding carbohydrate storage is key to understanding flowering, fruiting, leaf growth, and fire responses with implications for multispecies management. Hundreds of insect species tank up at palmetto flowers which fuels biodiversity ([Deyrup 2012](#)). Quail, foxes, turkey, deer, tortoises and especially Black Bears eat palmetto fruit. Bears and panthers require dense palmetto thickets for denning while Florida Scrub-Jays require low and open scrub. 'If Saw Palmetto is not the plant species most highly used by Florida wildlife, it certainly is in close contention for that honor' ([Maehr and Layne 1996](#)). Read full report [here!](#)

Photo at right of *Serenoa repens* in Corkscrew Swamp, Florida, by Dr. John Dransfield





## Florida Palms and Wildlife Enliven a Scarf by the Artists of Hermes

Pink flamingos, those huge, strangely beautiful birds, throw themselves once a year into a lengthy nuptial parade that sees them pair off, two by two... until next year. Flaunting their long, extraordinarily supple, graceful necks, their aristocratic bearing, their carefully preened wings, males and females take stock, brushing past one another, scrutinising their potential partners for hours on end. Surrounded by palms, orange trees and tropical flowers, their wings unfurled, in a frenzied tête-à-tête, the two birds pictured here are a celebration of their native

Florida. America's south-easternmost State is home to the celebrated Everglades national park, the habitat for a host of species including alligators, cougars, lynx, manatees and flamingos.