

Zombia Antillarum

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Of all the palms known to me in cultivation in South Florida, *Zombia antillarum* Bailey must stand out as being the most unusual of palms. Its small stature, interesting habit, and individual beauty certainly warrant its wider cultivation.

Zombia antillarum was introduced by the United States Plant Introduction Garden, Coconut Grove, in 1927 from seeds collected by O. F. Cook in Haiti. In its natural habitat it is found growing in isolated clumps on high slopes

of hills and in secondary forest growth. The several areas where *Zombia* are found are exceedingly hot and dry. It is closely allied to the *Coccothrinax* group and is the only true clustering palm of the subtribe *Thrinacinae* in which it belongs.

Its main attraction is the sleeve which completely encloses the trunks. The loose sleeve is the result of persisting leaf-sheaths described by Dr. Bailey as of "open-woven structure whose strands at the top make a formidable row of down-

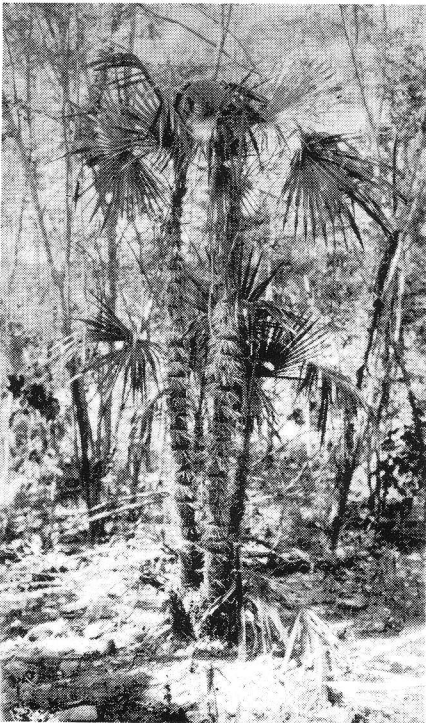


Photo by H. F. Loomis

ZOMBIA ANTILLARUM in dry forest, Gras Morne, Haiti. Photograph courtesy Plant Introduction Section, U.S.D.A.

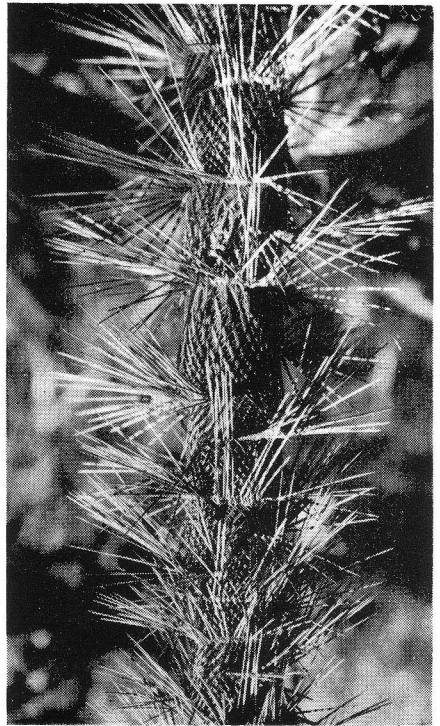


Photo by H. F. Loomis

ARMED LEAF SHEATHS OF *ZOMBIA ANTILLARUM*, Gras Morne, Haiti. Photograph courtesy Plant Introduction Section, U.S.D.A.



Photo by H. F. Loomis

FRUIT OF *ZOMBIA ANTILLARUM* as it grows at the U.S. Plant Introduction Garden, Coconut Grove, Florida. (Reprinted from *Gentes Herbarum* 4:244, fig. 157. 1939.)

ward-pointing spines." The whole sleeve gives the appearance of being woven by a craftsman.

Zombia is a small-growing cluster palm, the trunks reaching a height of ten feet or more. Its leaves are fan shaped, small, dull green above, and silvery beneath, the leaf segments on mature leaves being cut one-half to two-thirds to the base. Dead leaves are soon shed from the trunks. In June it sends out a somewhat erect inflorescence which eventually arches out under the weight of its fruits. The fruits are white at maturity in late August, varying from one-half to three-quarters of an inch in diameter, and are somewhat bilobed. It is also quite shade tolerant but, as with other clustering palms, more offshoots are produced in open locations than under shaded conditions and these grow more rapidly.

Several botanical treatments have been given this palm, the most complete being by Dr. Bailey in *Gentes Herbarum*, Volume 4, Fascicle 7, and by O. F. Cook under the name of *Oothinax anomala*, in *The National Horticultural Magazine*,

January, 1941. It is interesting to compare this palm as it grows in the wild with those growing under cultivation. I have seen photos and have spoken to persons who have seen *Zombia* in Haiti. There its appearance is straggly, while under good cultural practices it takes on handsome proportions. This seems to hold true for a number of palms growing under adverse conditions. Both treatments of *Zombia* describe it as sending up only two or three trunks at a time, arising from the slender shoots. Yet the oldest plant at the United States Plant Introduction Garden has five trunks over six feet tall, and some seven more varying in height from one to six feet tall. It has also been described as sending up a mound of superficial roots to one foot high, while under cultivation these roots are not very noticeable. Specimens under cultivation will also hold more leaves and are more prolific fruiterers.

The main objection to *Zombia antillarum* is its slowness of growth in the juvenile stage, but such a handsome and unusual palm is certainly worth waiting for.

PALM LITERATURE NOTED

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Beccari, O. & Pichi-Sermolli, R.E.G. Subfamiliae Arecoidearum Palmae Gerontogae Tribuum et Generum Conspectus. *Webbia* 11:1-187, f. 1-47. 1955. [Latin and Italian]

William W. Hargert

It is with regret that we must announce the passing of another of the Palm Society's first members. William W. Hargert, husband of Claire Hargert, our first Secretary, died very suddenly on April 8th of this year. A prominent insurance man of Ridgewood, N. J., Mr. Hargert was semi-retired, living most of the year in Ormond Beach, Fla. An avid gardener, he had built up there an extraordinary collection of tropical and semi-tropical plants, including some fine palms. The Society will miss one of its most enthusiastic supporters. To Mrs. Hargert we extend our deepest sympathy.