

begun active work again on a monograph of *Chamaedorea* and continues studies directed toward a "Genera of Palms."

RONALD L. MYERS, Department of Botany, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611, has accepted the challenge of studying *Raphia taedigera* swamps in Costa Rica for his doctoral dissertation and is currently located at Tortuguero, Costa Rica.

ERNESTO B. PANTASTICO, Director, PHTRC, Horticulture Department, UPLBCA, College, Laguna, Philippine Islands, has current research projects on palm mutation, the Philippine species of *Pinanga*, germination, palm seed storage and viability, and is also establishing a palm collection for the palmetum of the College of Agriculture, University of the Philippines.

JULIET PERKINS, Department of Biology, Boston University, Boston, MA 02215, has begun ecological studies of *Chamaedorea exorrhiza* at the La Selva Field Station of the Organization for Tropical Studies in Costa Rica as part of her program for a doctoral degree.

NATALIE W. UHL, L. H. Bailey Hortorium, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853, is pursuing anatomical, morphological, and developmental studies of the palm androecium, palm ovules, spines, and leaves.

## NATURAL HISTORY NOTES

Some palms may begin to rival Methuselah according to some recent studies on *Livistona* in Australia. *Livistona eastonii* in Western Australia is estimated to have an average maximum age of about 280 years, although exceptionally tall plants may be about 720 years old, according to R. J. Hnatiuk. Ages of 100 to 300 years are suggested for the oldest individuals of *Livistona mariae* in Central Australia by P. K.

Latz, who compared photographs taken in 1917, 1918, and 1935 with others of the same groups of palms in 1973. *Livistona mariae* is now listed as a rare species with about 3,000 individuals, a sharp contrast to *Livistona eastonii* of which Hnatiuk estimates there are about two million individuals larger than seedlings in a total population numbering in the tens of millions.

## REFERENCES

- HNATIUK, R. J. 1977. Population structure of *Livistona eastonii* Gardn., Mitchell Plateau, Western Australia. Australian Journal of Ecology 2: 461-466.
- LATZ, P. K. 1975. Notes on the relict palm *Livistona mariae* F. Muell. in Central Australia. Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia 99: 189-195.

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## PALM PORTRAIT

### *Burretiokentia hapala*

One of the most handsome of New Caledonian palms is *Burretiokentia hapala*, which was described only a decade ago (*Principes* 13: 67). Its dark green trunk with striking pale nodal rings reaches a height of about 10 m (33 ft) and a diameter of 10 cm (4 in). The leaves are nearly 2 m (6 ft) long and spread gracefully above sheaths that are dark green covered with brown scales outside but are pale or pinkish inside. The inflorescence is unusual in having a very dense cover of woolly brown hairs that almost obscure the small flowers. Fruits about 16 mm ( $\frac{5}{8}$  in) long are apparently brownish when mature and enclose a seed that is sculptured with ridges and furrows.

When first discovered, only a few individuals were found along the trail from Balade to Parari in northeastern New Caledonia. Subsequent exploration has shown the species to occur in gallery



1. *Burretio kentia hapala* photographed in gallery forest at the margin of a stream in Vallée des Palmiers, New Caledonia, early in November 1978 (Moore 10459).

forests by streams in the Vallée des Palmiers and Vallée de la Rade on the other side of the mountains. Still more recently it has been collected in wet forest at Paala in the upper reaches of the Diahot Valley. The species is apparently tolerant of both limestone, on which it occurs at Vallée des Palmiers,

and micaschist, on which it occurs at Paala. The species has recently been introduced into cultivation in the United States where it should prove a distinct contribution to the list of ornamental palms.

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