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PALM PORTRAIT



1. *Veillonia alba* in flower at about 500 m elevation on Mount Panié, New Caledonia.

Veillonia alba

A white-waxy bloom on bracts of the inflorescence and often the leaf sheath as well as the upper part of the trunk accounts for the epithet *alba* (white) used for this New Caledonian palm. The generic name (pronounced *vey óh nee a*) honors M. Jean-Marie Veillon of O. R. S. T. O. M. and the Service des Eaux et Forêts in Nouméa, who has accompanied me on many expeditions on the island and in whose company the type specimen was collected.

Veillonia alba H. E. Moore has single stems that reach a height of about 7 m (over 20 ft) and a diameter of 12 cm (about 5 in). They are green or gray-brown but, as noted, are often whitish on new growth. The tubular leaf sheaths form a whitish crownshaft that is usually overlain with a coat of brown or red-brown, woolly scales. Leaf blades are gracefully spreading, bearing between 40 and 50 pinnae on each side.

The inflorescence, which is always borne beneath the crownshaft, is much branched and when in flower (see Fig. 1) is creamy-white, covered with small creamy-white flowers. These are replaced in time by ovoid fruits about 16 mm ($\frac{5}{8}$ in) long that are noteworthy

for the minute papillae roughening the exterior. The color of the inflorescence changes from white to green as fruits mature and the fruits are probably reddish when ripe. Seeds are unusual in being crested, ridged, and sculptured, and were introduced into cultivation in 1976 and perhaps earlier, before the species had a name.

I first saw *Veillonia alba* during a visit to New Caledonia in April 1964 on the road from Balade to Parari at an elevation of about 350 m (1,150 ft), where it grew with *Burretio kentia hapala* (see *Principes* 23: 95), and at Colnett near sea level. In both instances, only flowers were seen and it was confused with another genus, *Cyphosperma*. Subsequent visits in 1971 and 1972 provided more complete collections as well as an understanding of *Cyphosperma* and in 1978 *Veillonia* was finally described (*Gentes Herbarum* 11: 299). There is only one species in the genus, which is now known to occur in several localities in northeastern New Caledonia and is cultivated at Tao in the yard of the Henwood home next to the road along the coast. It is certainly among the most attractive of New Caledonian palms and well deserves a place in cultivation.

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PALM BRIEFS

***Ptychosperma hosinoi* growing in Hawaii**

On a recent visit to the Lyon Arboretum in Honolulu, Hawaii, I noticed that several young palms, labeled as *Ptychosperma ledermannianum*, were blooming, apparently for the first time. I recognized immediately that these palms were *Ptychosperma hosinoi* rather than *P. ledermannianum*. It is not surprising

that these two species have been confused, for they both come from the tiny island of Ponape, in the Caroline Islands.

The distinction between the two species is as follows: *Ptychosperma ledermannianum* has inflorescences 60-80 cm long and 100 cm broad, with 4-5 orders of branching and numerous short rachillae, each bearing only 4-10 flower clusters. The inflorescence axes are very pale and quite glabrous. *Ptychosperma hosinoi* has inflorescences 60 cm long