



1. Date palms featured on the famed 6th century mosaics in the Basilica St. Apollinaris the New, Ravenna, Italy.

bage' from the top of the palm tree, and most of them were greatly impressed with its appearance and its peculiarly pleasant taste, though it also was extremely apt to cause headaches. Any palm tree from which the 'cabbage' had been taken out withered away entirely."

Xenophon's last sentence describes succinctly what happens to any palm when its cabbage is harvested, and that is the major reason why the widespread use of this underexploited palm product may never prove to be really practical.

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NOTES ON CULTURE

As Christmas trees go, the 40-foot-tall, 20-ton palm that took a prominent place on the Florida Institute of Technology campus at Melbourne, Florida in time for the 1979 holidays is as unusual as it is beautiful.

There was a Santa involved in the arrival of the huge *Phoenix reclinata* palm at F.I.T. Donating the 64-trunked tree was Norman S. Lund of West



I. Before and after. Above, an F.I.T. moving crew prepares the *Phoenix reclinata* for removal. The highway in the background is to be widened, work that threatened the tree; below, Norman Lund (left) and Dr. Keuper (right) with the palm in place on the F.I.T. campus. Photos by R. Goldberg.

Melbourne, who helped shape both the university and the Space Coast.

"This tree was here in 1940 when I bought this place. It was only a small

thing then," Lund said of the four-foot plant then in front of his home.

By the time an F.I.T. crew moved the plant, it could be handled only with the aid of a huge crane. Moving through the streets of West Melbourne and Melbourne to the F.I.T. campus, the tree required a police escort because its canopy spread across two lanes.

The move fulfilled a long-standing request by university President Jerome P. Keuper that the palm someday become a part of the campus. Since 1970, Dr. Keuper has secured more than 200 species of palms—more than 2000 trees in all—for F.I.T.'s collection.

"I told him I couldn't part with it," Lund said of his earlier response to Dr. Keuper. Over the years Lund also rejected several purchase offers, including one from a Disney World landscaper. The tree is currently valued at \$10,000.

The 83-year-old Lund, an F.I.T. trustee for more than a decade after the school was founded, decided to part company with the tree only after widening of Highway 192 into Melbourne threatened it. Lund has decided to move from his home near the highway, possibly to another area of Florida.

Ironically, it was a highway project that brought Lund to the Melbourne area. He was a foreman on work that saw the city get its first paved highway (U.S. 1) in 1925.

"To begin with, people were taller than the tree," Lund recalled, explaining that over the years winter visitors to his home had their photograph taken beside the tree.

As the tree and the Space Coast population grew, Lund headed an organization of chambers of commerce that made preparations for the U.S. Space Program. He was also an active developer.



2. Between. When the palm was moved toward the campus, a police escort cleared the way.
Photo by R. Goldberg.

He found the tree's ever-expanding fountain of greenery increasingly useful in shielding his home from noise and vehicle lights along the highway.

His chickens provided fertilizer for the tree, and a septic tank drainfield was placed so that "in good times and bad the tree always had moisture." But he noted, "I stopped fertilizing it when it looked like it was going into the telephone wires."

Despite his affinity for greenery—he is still active in a business that makes skin-care products from aloe plants—Lund said, "Dr. Keuper is a palm expert, but I'm not. I had a hard time remembering the name of that tree."

Dr. Keuper, a physicist and former aerospace executive who taught himself the art of palm collecting, placed Lund's *Phoenix reclinata* in the center of the university's quadrangle of offices and classrooms.

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Increasing interest in tree-based tropical agricultural systems, most