

Where's Joey?

MELVIN W. SNEED

8107 S.W. 72nd Ave., Apt. 113 E, Miami, Florida 33143, U.S.A.

Once upon a time there was a palm, and for more than a century it was named *Teysmannia*. Early on, it was thought to be a genus with a single species; namely, *T. altifrons*. Time has proved it to be one of the world's most beautiful palms, with three other species described. But very few collectors have this palm in their gardens, nor can one find it in most of the world's renowned botanical gardens. Extremely "rare in cultivation" is the cachet attached to it.

The name was changed, perhaps with good reason, as explained by our late editor of *Principes*, Dr. Harold E. Moore, Jr. (see Vol. 5, No. 4, 1961, p. 116). So the palm subsequently has been known as *Johannesteijsmannia*, and the name change (which indeed is a "mouthful") also provided a cover for additional species which have been identified and described by Dr. John Dransfield.

During some of our travels, Phyllis Sneed and I went in quest of this palm, found it, and tried to collect it, but with little success. Seeds, especially viable ones, are extremely hard to find. Except for one of the species, which Dr. John Dransfield discovered up north in Malaysia west of Ipoh, the palm has no trunk. The large, entire, diamond-shaped leaves are stiff and leathery in texture, extending up from the ground on long leaf stalks. *J. altifrons* fruits at ground level, so collectors beware! When brushing away debris from the base of the plant to look for seeds, use a stick rather than hand to avoid contact with a viper. But do not be deterred. Your author never has seen a snake in the forests where

this tree occurs, though no doubt some are there.

As one might surmise, the genus is indigenous largely to Malaysia (Peninsula Malaysia and Sarawak); it also occurs in Sumatra. If one crosses the causeway from Singapore to Malaysia, he will be in Johore; then a relatively short drive on up the East Coast to Mersing will deliver the "Joey" seeker into an area where they are abundant. However don't imagine that seeds will crawl into your open basket. Even here one should desert the highway and follow old loggers' roads back into



1. *Johannesteijsmannia* in the forest, Borneo.



2. Rain will not penetrate or leak through any shelter properly thatched with "Joey's" leaves.

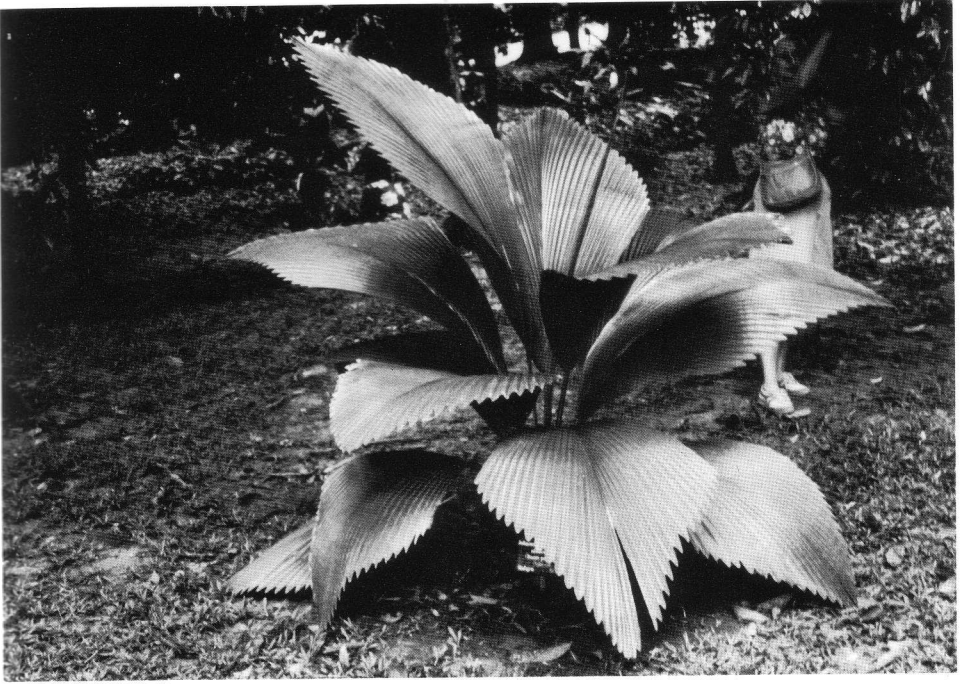


what's left of the forest. That would be the best chance of finding colonies of "Joey," some of which might be in fruit.

Also one can find this palm dispersed in forests in north and central western Malaysia as well as the eastern Malaysian State of Sarawak, Borneo. (See Fig. 1 for a host of them under the forest canopy in Bako National Park, Sarawak.) We observed that "Joey's" leaf is one of the best possible thatches for native structures. One does not have to shred it, mat it, or weave it. Just pluck the magnificent leaf and attach it to whatever framework is to be covered, overlap the leaves slightly,

←

3. *Johannesteijsmannia* in the Botanic Garden, Singapore (Eric Taylor furnishes scale). This may be the first "Joey" palm cultivated in the Garden. At one time, Waterfall Gardens, in Penang, had one growing, but it was lost.



4. Recently, the Singapore Garden has cultivated and planted out in two open areas (small triangular plots) three "Joey" in each.

and one has a waterproofed shelter (Fig. 2).

So we've seen the palm in its habitat. Where is "Joey" elsewhere? In 1978 we admired one specimen planted in the extensive gardens of Palm Society member, Mr. Paul Berli, in Bangkok, but it no longer survived in 1983 when we returned. To our knowledge, only the Singapore Botanical Garden now can boast of having it set out and growing.

Historically, some director got a "Joey" transplanted and established near his house at the far end of the Singapore Garden. Actually, this area was "out-of-bounds" for the multitudes visiting the garden, so hardly anyone saw the palm there. But the plant thrived, and on our second visit to the Garden we found and photographed it (Fig. 3). Since then the Singapore Garden, realizing that it has one of the world's

rarest and most beautiful palms in its own backyard, has cultivated the palm and now has six new plants set out, which we discovered in April, 1984. Three are set out in a shade area adjacent to young *Verschaffeltia splendida*, easily visible from a walkway, and three others are in deepest shade across a walkway from the orchid houses (Figs. 4, 5).

So far we have been experiencing *Johannesteijsmannia altifrons*. But with thanks to John Dransfield's field work, there are other species of this unusual palm to be sought. As recently as April, 1984, we were looking for palms in the Cameron Highlands, some five hours leisurely drive north of Kuala Lumpur, capital of Malaysia. Once there we were not far from Ipoh, in the outstretches of which Dr. Dransfield found the single trunked "Joey."

We wanted to drive on to Ipoh, but our



5. Same as Fig. 4, with your author admiring a specimen.



6. More palms, including *Iguanura*, on the hill (photographed by Eric Taylor).

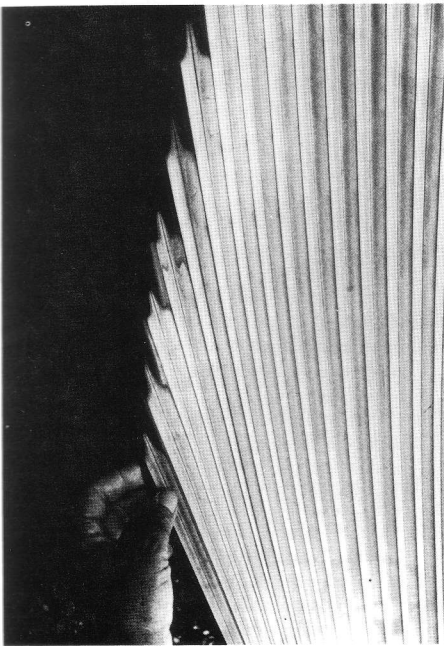
companion, and long-time Palm Society member in Malaysia, Eric Taylor, said, "Mel, we can't get in and out of Ipoh. The Malaysian Government has some insurgents bottled up there, and we are not able to get into the area where the palm is without special permission from the Government." That squelched the Ipoh end of our trek, but we had fun looking in other directions.

For three days we explored the beauty of Cameron Highlands and collected seed for the Palm Society Seed Bank, most notably of *Livistona speciosa*, *Licuala spinosa* and *Orania sylvicola*. This area is loaded with many species of palms, though we saw no "Joeys." We found *Iguanura wallichiana* (Fig. 6) and collected a few seeds of questionable viability, and the area is rich in species of *Pinanga*.

Back to Kuala Lumpur, Eric drove us south to Seremban, passing plantations of *Metroxylon*, *Elaeis guineensis*, coconuts, mangoes, mangosteens and longsats. We



7. Eric Taylor, Azhari Ahmad and your author pose with leaves of *Licuala longipes* and *Johannesteijsmannia magnifica*.



8. Underside of leaf of *Johannesteijsmannia magnifica*.

saw some of the huge durian trees along the roadside as well as one fruiting *Actinorhysis calapparis*. We passed a cocoa factory where Cadbury chocolate is refined from nearby cocoa plantings. Turning back north and west to the Jelebu area, we arrived at Jeram Toi picnic area by a waterfall with cement steps leading about 200 feet along a tumbling stream, and steep hills above it. Up the hillside and atop were *Johannesteijsmannia magnifica*, *Licuala longipes* and *Pinanga* sp. (Fig. 7).

The front side of this "Joey" leaf was a deep green, pleated and stiff. The reverse side was even more beautiful, silver-tinted, glistening in the sun, with perfect configuration and displaying a natural etching that borders the entire leaf in a zig-zag design (See Fig. 8). This species is the "grey" *Teysmannia* referred to by Dr. T. C. Whitmore in *Palms of Malaya*, p. 111, and only recently named by John Dransfield.

So, where do we go from here? Without doubt, *Johannesteijsmannia* being one of the world's most unusual and beautiful palms is endangered by logging and the shrinking forests of its habitat. In retrospect, the only way this rare palm ever will have a chance of being distributed is through the Palm Society Seed Bank. It behooves all of us (Palm Society members) to think a bit, and mount and support some effort to capture seeds of "Joey" to get it growing someplace outside of Malaysia. It will take a lot of "doing"!

BOOKSTORE

A MANUAL OF THE RATTANS OF THE MALAY PENINSULA (J. Dransfield 1979, 270 pp.)	\$25.00
COCONUT PALM FROND WEAVING (Wm. H. Goodloe 1972, 132 pp.)	3.95
CULTIVATED PALMS OF VENEZUELA (A. Braun 1970, 94 pp. and 95 photographs.)	4.50
FLORA OF PANAMA (Palms) (R. E. Woodson, Jr., R. W. Schery 1943, 122 pp.)	17.00
FLORA OF PERU (Palms) (J. F. MacBride 1960, 97 pp.)	8.00
FLORIDA PALMS, Handbook of (B. McGeachy 1955, 62 pp.)	1.95
HARVEST OF THE PALM (J. J. Fox 1977, 244 pp.)	16.50
INDEX TO PRINCIPES (Vols. 1-20, 1956-1976, H. E. Moore, Jr., 68 pp.)	3.00
MAJOR TRENDS OF EVOLUTION IN PALMS (H. E. Moore, Jr., N. W. Uhl 1982, 69 pp.)	6.00
PALMS (A. Blombery & T. Rodd 1982, 192 pp., 212 colored photographs)	30.00
PALMS IN AUSTRALIA (David Jones 1984, 278 pp., over 200 color photographs)	25.00
PALMS FOR THE HOME AND GARDEN (L. Stewart 1981, 72 pp., some color)	10.95
PALMS OF BRITISH INDIA & CEYLON (Blatter 1926, reprinted in India 1978, 600 pp.)	75.00
PALMS OF THE LESSER ANTILLES (R. W. Read 1979, 48 pp.)	8.00
PALMS OF MALAYA (T. C. Whitmore 1973, 132 pp.)	16.95
PALMS OF SOUTH FLORIDA (G. B. Stevenson 1974, 251 pp.)	7.95
PALMS OF THE WORLD (J. C. McCurrach 1960, 290 pp.)	19.00

In Malaysia, spring of 1984, we made an arrangement with Eric Taylor to correspond with Fairchild Garden, here in Miami, Florida, with a view to a plant exchange, including a seedling of "Joey." Eric had two of them started in his home nursery in Kuala Lumpur. We hope, eventually, that this deal will work out and Fairchild Garden will be a well-deserved beneficiary, with all thanks due to Eric Taylor.

PALM SAGO (K. Ruddle, D. Johnson, P. K. Townsend, J. D. Rees 1978, 190 pp.)	7.50
SECRET OF THE ORIENT DWARF <i>Rhapis excelsa</i> (L. McKamey 1983, 51 pp.)	3.95
SUPPLEMENT TO PALMS OF THE WORLD (A. C. Langlois 1976, 252 pp.)	25.00
THE GENUS <i>PTYCHOSPERMA</i> LABILL. (F. B. Essig 1978, 61 pp.)	5.50
THE INDIGENOUS PALMS OF SURINAME (J. G. W. Boer 1965, Part of Flora, 172 pp.)	42.00
THE MAJOR GROUPS OF PALMS AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION (H. E. Moore, Jr., 1973, 115 pp.)	4.50
THE MINIATURE PALMS OF JAPAN (U. Okita, J. L. Hollenberg 1981, 135 pp.)	19.95
THE PALM FLORA OF NEW GUINEA (F. B. Essig, 1977, 46 pp.)	6.50

PALM PAPERS (Postage Included)

FURTHER INFORMATION ON HARDY PALMS (J. Popenoe 1973, 4 pp.)	1.25
NOTES ON PRITCHARDIA IN HAWAII (D. Hodel 1980, 16 pp.)	2.00
RARE PALMS IN ARGENTINA (reprint from <i>Principes</i> , E. J. Pingitore 1982, 9 pp., 5 beautiful drawings)	2.75
THE HARDIEST PALMS (J. Popenoe 1973, 4 pp.)	1.25

The palm books listed above may be ordered at the prices indicated plus \$1.25 extra per book to cover packaging and postage. (California residents please add 6% sales tax.) Foreign checks must be in US dollars and payable on a USA bank. In some countries it is possible to send International Money Orders through the Post Office. Send check payable to The International Palm Society to Pauline Sullivan, 3616 Mound Avenue, Ventura, CA 93003, U.S.A. ALL SALES FINAL.