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Palmateer? Palmophile? Palmophilia? Palmologist?

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Have you ever searched for a word to express your love of palms when talking with a friend about your Palm Society activities? Did you end up telling your friend you are a palm "nut"? I realized I was not the only one frustrated by lack of words to express my feelings when I read in Lynn McKamey's book, the "*Secret of the Orient, Dwarf Rhapis Excelsa*," page 46:

"What do you call a Palm Collector"? English lacks a one-word term signifying "palm fancier," and besides nobody wants to go about the world blurting out, "I'm a palm fancier!" One occasionally sees the work "palmologist" applied to the scientific investigator of palms, but a good many scientists avoid it as too contrived and doubtful of etymological standing, hardly more than a cut or two above "mixologist" for a bartender. Two good English words that would do are "palmist" and "palmer," but both have been pre-empted . . . the former is a soothsayer; the latter is a pilgrim, or else he is a card shark. The only word left to use seems to be "palmateer." Even though it has a jaunty sound, with overtones of recklessness, its meaning would be apparent to highbrows, lowbrows, and middlebrows alike."

Dent Smith first used palmateer in an article in *Principes*, vol. 1, Number 3.

Knowing that new words are introduced into the English language by the simple process of usage by writers and

scholars, I examined *Webster's New World Dictionary*, the *Oxford English Dictionary* and *Webster's New International Dictionary*, 2nd edition, unabridged to see if I could form some new words that would describe my love for palm trees. I found that *phil* or *phile*, from the Greek, is a combining word which is used regularly to indicate love of or liking, as in bibliophile, philharmonic and philhellenic. On this model the new compound palmophile is a good English word meaning one who loves palms.

Searching further, the ending *philia* indicates a tendency toward, or abnormal attraction to, as in hemophilia and coprophilia. The ending *ia* indicates a condition as in anemia or pneumonia. Palmophilia, then, is a term some of us may apply to ourselves depending on the degree of mania we claim or how abnormal our palm fixation is.

The ending *ology* and *logy* indicate a discourse or study as in biology, geology, and psychology. Palmology, then, is a perfectly good word indicating the study of palm trees. After looking at very long lists of combined words using this suffix, palmology seemed very natural, and not a bit contrived. The etymological validity of these words is dependent only on whether it is used by knowledgeable writers or speakers. The rule is that when a word comes to be accepted it is added to the dictionary.

Continuing my research, the ending *eer* indicates "one who." Examples were volunteer, mutineer, and auctioneer. Palm-

ateer, then, gives one the image of a palmophile cutting his way through jungle underbrush in quest of new palm species.

We should use these words in *Principes* and our regional newsletters.* Dictionary publishers should be notified and given examples of the context in which the words are used. It is up to us!

Other words of special interest to the Palm Society which are already in the dictionary include the following:

Palmaceous—(*adj.*) pertaining to palms; of the nature of, or resembling palms

Palmary—a token of victory or supreme excellence, a prize. That bears or is worthy to bear the palm. Holding the first or highest place; of supreme or first-rate importance; pre-eminent, principle, chief. "But the Palmary argument . . ."

* Walter H. Hodge recently used Palmophile in *Principes*, vol. 30(1): 17.

Palmeous—of palms or palmwood

Palmery—a collection of palm trees, a place or house in which they are grown, a palm-house

Palmetto—(*noun*) any of several fan palms; (*adj.*) woven of palmetto leaves, as palmetto baskets, etc.

Palmful—full of or abounding in palm trees. "... dry and sandy soil spreads palmful forests."

Palmicolous—(*colus* means inhabiting) growing upon or inhabiting palm trees

Palming—(*verb*) gathering palms—like blackberrying. The second meaning is bearing palms or palm fronds as at Easter

Palmivorous—(*vorus* means devouring) feeding on or obtaining food from palm trees

Palmiferous—(*ferous* means bearing) bearing or carrying palm branches

Palmy—bearing or abounding in palms as a palmy shore