

*Principes*, 31(2), 1987, p. 104

## PALM BRIEF

### The Serpent Palm

The palm in Figure 1 is the same one that Dent Smith is observing on the cover of the January 1986 issue of *Principes*. The 'serpent palm' connotation in the explanation of the cover of the journal refers to the circular growth of this sabal. After growing to normal height of some 15 to 20 feet, it could have been blown over in a rain and wind storm and upon recovery began to grow horizontally and at the same time curving upwards towards a light source. Dense foliage and the weight of the leaves and bud also assisted in the circular growth. Dent probably traveled at least a half a mile through Florida swamp land to reach this palm and have his picture taken.

My current personal opinion of the area is that the owner of the land at one time was interested in trees in general. There are large full grown pecan trees, numerous citrus trees and an oak that is estimated to be over 400 years old. However, progress takes its toll. The bull dozers have destroyed untold numbers of different varieties of trees planted, not by a 'palm nut,' but I think by just a plain 'tree nut.' Today



1. *Sabal palmetto*, approximately 65' in length forms a complete circle around an oak tree, Port Orange, FL.

there is a housing development here and our sabal will be about 15 feet from the edge of the paved street.

I would have to think that this tree has grown 10 to 15 feet since Dent's picture and I have been assured that the developer will preserve the setting. The palm is over 65' in length now and seems to be in good health. The location is at the Country Walk subdivision in Port Orange, Fla.

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