

of the leaf base growing more than the upper.

#### *Literature Cited*

Holttun, R. E. 1955. Growth-habits of Monocotyledons — Variations on a Theme. *Phytomorphology*. 5(4): 399-413.

### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

*Bismarckia* (biz már key a), a generic name established by Hildebrand and Wendland, honors the eminent Prussian statesman whose full and resounding name was Prince Otto Eduard Leopold von Bismarck-Schönhausen. It was Prince Bismarck (1815-1898), the "Iron Chancellor", who molded the conflicting kingdoms and principalities of 19th century Germany into a united nation and one of the world's great powers—which accomplishment was destined to provide a goodly measure of color and excitement for the 20th century, to say the least. The genus *Bismarckia* as now interpreted consists of only one species, the *B. nobilis*, a massive fan palm native to Madagascar.

*Euterpe* (you túr pee), one of the nine Muses of Greek mythology, was the goddess who presided over lyric song and poetry. Her Greek name is made up of the combination *eu* (well) plus *terpein* (to delight). Traditionally, the Muses were the daughters of Zeus, father of the gods, by Mnemosyne, goddess of memory. *Euterpe* is a genus comprising more than forty species of exceedingly graceful, unarmed, tropical American feather palms first described by Joseph Gaertner in 1788. Most of the euterpe palms have edible buds which taste like raw cabbage, and have come to be known rather commonly as cabbage palms.

*Geonoma* (gee o nó ma) is a genus whose members are typically smallish, graceful, moisture-loving slender palms abounding in the dense shade of tropical American forest floors. The technical name, originated by Willdenow, derives from the Greek prefix *geo* (earth, ground) plus *nomos* (district, province), which combination gives *geonomos* (colonist, in the sense of "one who is a member or an inhabitant of a colony"). The species constituting *Geonoma*, like those of *Bactris* and *Chamaedorea* also of the Western Hemisphere, are very numerous. Well over one hundred fifty species range from Mexico far into South America with a particularly copious representation being found in Costa Rica, Colombia, and Brazil.

*Jessenia* (jess én ee a), a genus of tropical American pinnate palms with long, erect leaves and drooping leaflets, was established by Karsten to honor Dr. Carl Jessen, a professor of botany at Eldena, Prussia. A total of five species are currently known to science, four in South America and one from the island of Trinidad (*J. oligocarpa*).

*Nannorrhops* (nán o rawps), a generic name established by Hermann Wendland, is composed of the two Greek words *nannos* (dwarf) and *rhops* (bush, shrub) in allusion to the fact that these fan palms with their prostrate branching stems are commonly low in stature. The double r of *-rrhops* in such compounds is classically proper because of the single vowel which precedes. As now understood, the genus is composed of three species native to lofty, arid, cold regions of northern India. One of these, the *N. Ritchieana*, ranges westward into Afghanistan. Inasmuch as these palms are indigenous to regions

approximating parallel 30 (the latitude of New Orleans, Houston, and St. Augustine in America), it seems reasonable to infer that we have here a genus of palms hardy enough to adapt to much of the South and West in our own country. As for special soil requirements or the adverse effects of our extreme summer temperatures and humidity, it can only be averred that the *N. Ritchieana* specimens, for example, which have been planted in several Florida gardens in the vicinity of Miami have matured and are thriving well. Unfortunately, however, we shall have to obtain seeds from the Old World, for our American immigrants have thus far refused to supply us.

*Oreodoxa* (o ree o dóck sa) combines the Greek words *oreos* (mountain) and *doxa* (praise, glory). Established by Willdenow for palms not clearly understood, this generic term was long thought applicable to the genus of royal palms. Since several of the known species of royal palms are not particularly happy as "glories of the mountain", it is perhaps just as well that this poetic designation has been supplanted by the name *Roystonea*. J. K. Small in his well-known *Manual of the Southeastern Flora* (1933) misspells the word "Oreodoxa" both in the body of the text (p. 238) and in the index (p. 1537).

*Rhapis* (ráy pis), the genus comprising the so-called Lady Palms, was established in 1789. The name comes from the Greek word *rhapis* (rod), alluding to the rod-like canes or stems. Nine species of *Rhapis* are at present recognized by botanists, of which the *R. excelsa* (*R. flabelliformis*) and the *R. humilis* are perhaps the best known in our country. They are deservedly popular as ornamentals since they are of graceful, modest proportions, unarmed, and

easy of culture. There is a genus of grasses, not to be confused with the above, known as *Rhaphis*, Lour. (pronounced ráy fis) which is the Greek word for needle. Both *Rhapis* and *Rhaphis* are valid generic terms, sufficiently distinct to be acceptable under the rules of botanical nomenclature. The palm specialist Burret has indicated that *Rhaphis*, Walp. is in error as a synonym of *Rhapis*.

*Rhyticocos* (rit i kó kos) is formed from the Greek word *rhytis* (a wrinkle or fold) and the Portuguese and Spanish *coco* (coconut palm). The word *coco*, a Romance language form, comes from the Latin *cocum* (berry, kernel) which was derived from the Greek *kokkos* (berry, seed). *Rhyticocos* alludes to the prominently sulcate or grooved inner spathe, one of the features which segregates the genus from *Cocos*. In *Rhyticocos amara*, the sole species now known to science, the adjective *amara* (bitter, in reference to the liquor within the nut) reflects the feminine gender of the generic name.

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## IN AND OUT OF THE PALM GARDEN

The notion that the coconut palm has distributed itself by means of its buoyant fruits on tropical sea beaches around the entire globe is so universal that it is still held to be a fact, despite accumulated evidence to the contrary, by most of the botanists who have had no occasion to reflect upon it and much less to investigate it. Encyclopedias, even, have helped to perpetuate this entrenched belief, superficially so very reasonable and ready-made for credence. It is true that coconuts in their husks will float, that they are often sea-borne over great