

quarantine restrictions, whenever their steamship stopped to take on coal? Such an action would considerably improve the chance that these notoriously poor germinating varieties would survive long distance dissemination – journey times that would have been impossible to Polynesians or to Europeans in wooden sailing ships.

So, do the descriptions and illustrations help resolve the identity of coconut specimens or

populations, and show if they are indeed true to type? This guide is certainly a good and worthwhile attempt but there are so many synonymous coconut variety names that it may not entirely succeed.

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PALM LITERATURE

PALMS OF CHILE. A DETAILED INVESTIGATION OF THE TWO ENDEMIC PALMS AND A REVIEW OF INTRODUCED SPECIES. Dr. Juan Grau V. Ediciones OIKOS, Santiago de Chile. 2006. ISBN 956-7277-18-4. Price unknown. Hardcover. Pp 203. Available at www.doctorjuangrau.cl

This is lavishly produced privately printed work encapsulating the enthusiasm of the author for palms, and, in particular for *Jubaea chilensis* and *Juania australis*. It is, apparently, produced in three different language editions – Spanish, English and French.

There is a brief introduction to the palm family and characteristics of palms in general. Thereafter follow 20 pages devoted to *Juania* and 94 pages to *Jubaea*. In Section 3 of the book the author discusses ten genera of introduced palms. Section 4 deals with palm cultivation and Section 5 pests and diseases. The book ends with an epilogue, a poem to *Jubaea* and glossaries, references and an index

There are plenty of photographs, drawings and paintings throughout, including some most compelling photographs of *Jubaea* and particularly rare, photographs of *Juania* in the wild. Of considerable interest is a discussion of the extinct palm, *Paschalococos disperta* on Easter Island that Dr. Grau has no difficulty in equating with extant *Jubaea chilensis*, an assumption that this reviewer cannot agree with, while admitting that the extinct palm most closely resembles *Jubaea*. Dr. Grau proposes that *Jubaea* reached Easter Island by floating across the sea from Chile. He briefly reports experiments he performed on the buoyancy of *Jubaea* seeds in sea water and the survival of the embryos. Seed remained buoyant in sea water for four months, this allowing the author to conclude that *Jubaea* could have reached Easter Island by sea dispersal. I believe we need much more rigorous experimentation before such conclusions can be reached.

This is an attractive publication that has been produced as a labour of love.

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