

Islands is usually enough to make you wonder whether any coconuts are naturally distributed by currents. Especially the northwest coast of little Lanai, which I visited in 1955; on that beach, which is directly in line with currents cutting through the channel between Lanai, Maui, and Molokai, there must have been ten thousand nuts tumbled up on the beach, and not a single one germinated. Hundreds were rotten, whether from exposure at sea or on the beach could not be told. The habitat is not unsuitable for coconuts, yet none apparently ever germinate there, or if they do, fail to grow to maturity. Similar sights may be seen at other locations on other islands, although the tremendous number of nuts along the Lanai coast was not duplicated.

But there are exceptions, and one merits mention. In the Marshall Islands the coconut is very common, and there one may find germinating nuts occasionally along the beaches, and sometimes a young tree following some of the more aggressive plants, such as beach morning-glory, onto a new sandspit.

It seems to me that the experiments of Edmondson ("Viability of Coconut Seeds after Floating in Sea," *Bishop Museum Occasional Papers* vol. XVI, no. 12, 1941) could well be repeated, with attention to reduplication of sets and a much greater use of samples. As it is, he has shown that nuts may survive after floating for as long as 110 days, which time is sufficient, according to Edmondson, for a possible drift of 3,000 miles.

Sincerely yours,
BENJAMIN C. STONE

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Astrocaryum (as tro cárry um) was erected in 1818 by G. F. W. Meyer on a palm collected in British Guiana. A

combination of the Greek nouns *astron* (star) and *karyon* (nut), the Latinized generic term is neuter gender which is reflected in the -um termination of modifying adjectives used as specific epithets: *A. aculeatum*, *A. mexicanum*, *A. Standleyanum*. A number of autochthonous names for these strongly armed pinnate palms from the New World tropics came to be applied as specific epithets in formal taxonomy. These terms are correctly spelled with a capital letter to denote that they are vernacular words standing in apposition to the generic name: *A. Burity*, *A. Chambira*, *A. Guara*, *A. Hui-cungo*, *A. Malybo*, et al. The star-nut palms, numbering more than 40 species, were so named because of the curious starlike marks radiating from the pores of the hard endocarp.

Chrysalidocarpus (kris al i do cár pus) is basically the Latinized combination of the Greek words *chrysallis* (gold-colored pupa of butterflies) and *karpos* (fruit). The six-syllable union which results, with its primary accent on the penultima (next-to-the-last syllable), requires a weaker secondary accent on one of the preceding syllables. The Latin genitive singular *chry-sál-li-dis* gives us a clue as to the most logical site for this essential secondary stress. This position is further supported by the pronunciation of the English word *chrysalides* (kris á li deez), one of two possible plural forms of *chrysalis* (krís a lis), a term used by zoologists to indicate the pupa of insects in general. As regards our generic term, then, in English phonetic syllabification, the complete stress pattern would be: kris á li do cár pus. When Hermann Wendland founded the generic name, he first printed the word with a double l in his preliminary discussion; however, in his ensuing formal account of the genus, he spelled the name *Chrysalidocarpus*. About 20 species of these unarmed Ma-

dagascar feather palms are now known to science. When stripped of the epicarp to reveal the spotted mesocarp, most of the fruits bear a striking resemblance to butterfly pupae. Concerning those generic names whose final component is -carpus, in the *Palmae* family all such names are masculine gender with the specific epithet, if an adjective, in agreement: *Chrysalidocarpus lanceolatus*, *Oenocarpus panamanus*, *Pholidocarpus macrocarpus*, *Trachycarpus Martianus*. Regrettably this consistency does not extend to genera in other families of the plant kingdom. We have, for example: *Podocarpus elongata* but *Pachycarpus grandiflorus*; *Artocarpus integra* but *Orthocarpus tennifolius*; *Lithocarpus glabra* but *Lonchocarpus speciosus*; etc.

Serenoa (ser ee nó a), a monotypic

genus with the *S. repens* as the unique representative, was established by Joseph Dalton Hooker to honor Sereno Watson (1826-1892), American botanist and erstwhile curator of the Gray Herbarium at Harvard University. The generic name represents one of those unusual instances in which an individual's given name was utilized to form the technical term. Inasmuch as a genus *Watsonia* had previously been validly published for certain South African herbs of the *Iridaceae* group, Hooker had no other recourse for his dedication. Previous to our present understanding of this variable fan palm ranging from South Carolina to the Florida Keys, the so-called "saw palmetto" had been referred to *Corypha*, *Sabal*, *Brahea*, and *Chamaerops*.

BRUCE H. BEELER

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