

tropical sea coasts" is, and remains, a true idea.

Conclusions

From the preceding study, which was chiefly suggested to me by the conditions in which the Palmyra Islands were found by their explorers, Messrs. H. E. Cooper and J. F. Rock, I conclude:

1. That the coconut palm may have been very easily disseminated by the agency of oceanic currents.
2. That the coconut palm is a halophilous plant with a predilection for the sea shore.
3. That an Asiatic or Polynesian origin of the coconut palm is more probable than an American one.
4. That the coconut palm can occasionally exist and reproduce itself in the tropics independently of man, and that the latter's protection is necessary to it only when it occurs in regions where its existence is disputed by the nature of the soil, by other pre-existing vegetation, or by foes of various kinds.

THE EDITOR'S CORNER

The present issue of *PRINCIPES* contains an article by Beccari which several persons have suggested be reprinted. The original intent was to divide it between two issues, but upon thought such a division seemed inadvisable. Thus it is reprinted in its entirety, together with the summary of O. F. Cook's arguments about the origin of the coconut, at the risk of an overdue emphasis on the coconut in one issue.

It should be noted that some of Beccari's observations concerning the classification of palms related to *Cocos*, and particularly *Eugeissona*, would perhaps be modified by contemporary writers.

The Editor also wishes to note that the authorship of "What's in a Name?" should have been credited to Bruce H. Beeler in the January issue page 34.

USES OF COCO-DE-MER TREE

The stem does not find any use as the wood is rather soft and is liable to rot easily. It is therefore useless as a source of timber.

The leaves provide a first class material for thatching purposes. They are so large that only a few are sufficient to cover a native hut completely.

The young leaves are used on a large scale for making the beautiful straw hats which are worn by a large fraction of the population. They enter also in the composition of the coco-de-mer mats and baskets which are turned out in large numbers by expert hands.

The fruit is eaten at an early stage during its development.

The nuts are exported and sold in the East, where the endosperm is reputed for its medicinal properties. Arabs and Indians use it as a tonic, an aphrodisiac, and a poison antidote.

It is a pity that attempts to use the endosperm as vegetable ivory failed on account of the ease with which it cracks. Professor Pieraets of Brussels tried his best to overcome this difficulty but unfortunately his attempts to produce a commercial product from the endosperm failed.

The shell of the nut is put to various uses: water bottles, fruit bowls, bowls for baling, plates, etc., etc.

The plates and dishes of coco-de-mer are well known objects in the Praslin crockery. Bowls for baling form the equipment of every boat and "pirogue."

The bowls produced when the lobes of the nut are cut parallel to the sinus are well known in Mauritius where shopkeepers use them for measuring out rice or sugar.

At one time the bowls were quite useful in Mauritius sugar factories where

they were used to scoop out sugar from the centrifugals.

Pilgrims on their way to Mecca are supposed to eat their food from utensils produced by nature and there again the coco-de-mer bowls become of some use.

[From F. Durocher Yvon, "Seychelles Botanical Treasure: 'The Coco-de-Mer' Palm (*Lodoicea maldivica*, Pers.)" in *Revue Agricole de l'Île Maurice* 26: 86. 1947].

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Ammandra am án dra is a relative of *Phytelephas* in which, according to O. F. Cook, "The stamens are minute and have the appearance of small grains of sand scattered over the surface of the

receptacles, thus suggesting the generic name *Ammandra*." The name was formed from the Greek *ammos* (sand) and a modification of *aner* (man) since the stamens are the male elements of the plant.

* * *

Palandra (pal an dra) is another relative of *Phytelephas* with a name apparently derived from the Greek *pas* (*pal-*) meaning all, the whole, very, and a modification of *aner*, man. Cook unfortunately did not explain the origin of the name but perhaps it refers to the very many stamens (about 1000).

H. E. MOORE, JR.

Classified Section

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Toddy Collection in Ceylon

W. H. HODGE

National Science Foundation, Washington, 25, D. C.

Toddy, the sweet fresh sap of palm trees is a familiar beverage consumed daily by the country folks in many parts of tropical Asia — especially India, Ceylon, Malaya and Indonesia. Best known source is the toddy palm, *Caryota urens* (familiar to us as one of the attractive fishtail palms of ornamental horticulture), but several other species are also valued for their sugary sap, including the palmyra palm, *Borassus flabellifer*, the gomuti palm, *Arenga pinnata*, as well as the tropics' omnipresent coconut palm, *Cocos nucifera*. In all these species the sap is obtained by tapping the young unopened inflorescence, or spadix. As this appears as a tender bud from the leaf axilla the tip is cut off and the ooz-

ing liquid is then collected in a container, from which it is collected daily.

Although abundant palm species native to the New World might well have been tapped to produce a toddy, apparently the utilization of this fresh liquid was never developed among American aborigines who were familiar, however, with the production of palm wine. In contrast toddy has probably been utilized by man in Asia for a very long period. Marco Polo, in the 13th century, was among the first European travelers to briefly describe toddy production (on the island of Sumatra, "Kingdom of Samara"). In Book III of his *Travels* he writes: "Wine is not made; but from a species of tree resembling