

It goes without saying that these gentlemen keep on trying to grow an ever increasing collection of exotic palms.

We also visited the estate of Dr. Walder in Valle Verzasca, a wild and craggy mountain valley leading north towards the Alps. The success story of his palm garden is perhaps not so much in its great variety but rather the steep back of the house which has turned into a self propagating, totally acclimatized jungle of *Trachycarpus fortunei*, with plants of all sizes from seedlings to fully grown 15 m palms.

Principes, 33(1), 1989, p. 44

NATURAL HISTORY NOTE

Flowering in *Corypha*

An interesting phenomenon occurred in 1988 in the Miami area. To date, seven *Corypha* palms are known to have flowered. Although the individual flowers are not open at the time of this writing, the huge inflorescences are quite impressive.

The first to be noticed were two *Corypha umbraculifera*, the Talipot Palm, at the USDA Sub-tropic Research Station. The seeds of these imposing palms were collected at Atkins Garden, Cuba in 1952. The seedlings were planted at the Station during the following year.

In December 1987, a staff member at Fairchild Tropical Garden saw a newly developing flower spike of *Corypha taliera*. This smaller relative of the Talipot, *C. umbraculifera* is also a native of India. The seed of this palm was collected in 1956 in Rio Botanic Garden.

Soon afterward, we learned of additional *Corypha umbraculifera* displaying young inflorescences. Two of these plants are at

Conclusion

Palms in Europe are obviously not a new discovery. People have long grown and loved many more palms than the two native species, *Chamaerops humilis* and *Phoenix theophrasti*. I have seen palms in Roman mosaics and in a Byzantine church. However, in modern times they have been grown for their beauty and tropical image for at least 150 years in reasonable quantities all over the more temperate parts of Europe.

the University of Florida's Tropical Research and Education Campus. According to Dr. Carl Campbell, these were received as seedlings in 1930. The palms were planted in 1933. Another was discovered to be sending up a new inflorescence at the USDA Station. Its origin is not known. A seventh *Corypha umbraculifera* is in a private residence in Coral Gables near Fairchild Tropical Garden. The origin of this palm is also unclear.

Botanists and palm enthusiasts agree that a certain level of maturity must be reached by a *Corypha* before it has the potential to flower. The time required by an individual is determined by its environmental conditions. Once maturity is attained, climatic conditions must trigger the flowering process. While these factors may not be under the control of man, it would be of great interest to know the cause of this spectacular event.

For more information about *Corypha umbraculifera*, please refer to *Principes* 19(3), 1975, pp. 83-99 and *Principes* 31(2), 1987, pp. 68-77.

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