

Distribution Update: *Sabal domingensis* in Cuba

SCOTT ZONA

Dept. of Botany, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611 USA

I recently had the privilege of visiting the province of Guantánamo, Cuba, while collecting *Roystonea* for a study of that genus. Along the southern coast, near the town of Imías, I met with an apparently indigenous species of *Sabal* that was in all respects more massive than *Sabal* seen elsewhere on the island. Having recently studied the genus *Sabal*, I was especially interested in these palms and curious about their identity. Regrettably, the palms had been heavily cropped for thatch, and I was unable to gather material for study and identification.

One week later, in the Herbarium of the Institute of Ecology and Systematics of the Cuban Academy of Sciences (HAC), I found three complete specimens with leaves, flowers, and fruits that permitted me to identify the Imías palms as *Sabal domingensis* Becc., a species heretofore known only from northern Hispaniola (Zona 1990). The specimens are: *León 14249* collected in November, 1929, at Río del Medio, at the foot of the Sierra de Imías; *León 14258* collected in January, 1930, from the banks of Río Imías; and *León 14603* collected in June, 1930, from the Imías region.

This extension in the range of *S. domingensis* is not unexpected. From the eastern end of Cuba, one can see the mountains of Haiti on the horizon. *Sabal domingensis* occurs abundantly in the northern part of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and the fruits of all *Sabal* are readily transported by birds (Zona 1990). The eastern end of Cuba shares its greatest floristic affinity with Hispaniola, so *S. domingensis*

echoes a well documented relationship between the two islands (Howard 1973).

Bisse (1981) reported a palm from the southern coast of Cuba which he called "*S. cf. umbraculifera*," an ambiguous name which has been applied to many species of *Sabal* from virtually every island in the Caribbean (Zona 1990). Bailey (1939) applied the name *S. umbraculifera* Mart. to the *Sabal* of Hispaniola, and Bisse may have been using the name in this sense. There are, however, two species that occur on Hispaniola: *S. domingensis* in the northern part of the island and *S. causiarum* (Cook) Becc. to the south. As Bisse cited no specimens, his report could not be verified, and the Imías palm could not be identified until now.

This addition to the palm flora of Cuba brings to four the number of species of indigenous *Sabal*. *Sabal domingensis* is restricted to the Imías region of Guantánamo, *S. maritima* (Kunth) Burret is found throughout central Cuba, *S. palmetto* (Walt.) Lodd. ex J. A. & J. H. Schultes (syn. *S. parviflora* Becc.) is widespread, and *S. yapa* Wright ex Becc. occurs in western Cuba and the Isle of Youth. No species is endemic to Cuba.

Support for field work in Cuba was provided by a Michaux Grant from the American Philosophical Society. I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the staff of the Jardín Botánico Nacional and the Instituto de Ecología y Sistemáticas, Havana.

LITERATURE CITED

- BAILEY, L. H. 1939. The sabals of Hispaniola. *Gentes Herb.* 4: 271-275.

- BISSE, J. 1981. *Arboles de Cuba*. Editorial Científico-Técnica, La Habana. 384 p.
- HOWARD, R. A. 1973. The vegetation of the Antilles. In: Graham, A. (ed.). *Vegetation and vegetational history of northern Latin America*.

Elsevier Scientific Publishing, Amsterdam, pp. 1-38.

- ZONA, S. 1990. A monograph of *Sabal* (Arecaceae: Coryphoideae). *Aliso* 12: 583-666.

Principes, 36(1), 1992, p. 35

PALM BRIEF

Ptychosperma elegans regenerating in Southern California

In the Spring of 1970, I planted a one gallon sized plant of *Ptychosperma elegans*. In those days, we had our usual ten year cycle of freezes. For the last four or five years, we have been having them every year. Apparently 1970 was a good year, because the palm got off to a good start, and had grown well from the very beginning. I also planted close by, a plant of *Chrysalidocarpus madagascariensis* var. *lucubensis*, which initially grew much more slowly. I was thrilled when my *Ptychosperma* got to the point when a trunk began to form. Hey, this was a rare palm in those days for California. As a matter of fact, the *Ptychosperma* had two and a half feet of trunk, while the *Chrysalidocarpus* had not yet formed even an inch. Three years ago, the *Ptychosperma* developed an inflorescence and when seed formed, I gathered them up in an effort to germinate them. Not a single one sprouted. The following year, seed formed again, and I had intended to sprout them, but neglected to do so, and they all fell to the ground. I intended to gather some to try to germinate them, but again neglected to do so. About a year and a half ago or so, in March, after a winter freeze, I happened to be working in the garden, when I noticed hundreds of

small seedlings sprouting in the ground under the *Ptychosperma elegans*. I could hardly believe it, especially after a freeze. I gently dug many of them and potted them into liners. Last January, the seeds ripened again, and this time I collected and planted them into an appropriate mix. Two months later, they sprouted and now I have hundreds of small seedlings. There are still small seedlings growing in the ground and to my knowledge, this is the first time this particular palm has regenerated in a garden in Southern California. Of course, I don't claim that one could throw seed on a vacant lot or parcel of ground and they would germinate, as would be expected of *Washingtonia robusta* or *Phoenix canariensis*, but I think with a reasonable amount of garden moisture they might. I would like to think that my *Ptychosperma elegans* would be a little more hardy for California than those grown from seed that came from the tropics. Perhaps it can be tested some day. By the way, the *Chrysalidocarpus madagascariensis* var. *lucubensis*, now has a taller, wider trunk, and is taller overall than the *Ptychosperma elegans*, but it has not yet flowered. I am patiently waiting for that day to come.

RALPH VELEZ
15461 Devonshire Circle
Westminster, CA 92683