

*Principes*, 37(2), 1993, pp. 108-109

## A Visitor's View of the 1992 IPS Biennial

The following is reprinted from the January issue of *Principes Minor*, the magazine of the Sydney [Australia] Chapter of the International Palm Society. These are the views of Peter Kristensen, who came to the meeting with his wife Lynn, and are endorsed by the editor. A few notes have been added [by Jim Cain, in brackets].

Although ravaged by a hurricane only two months before, Florida still provided an excellent venue for the '92 Biennial. Lynn and I overnighted in Los Angeles and were able to have breakfast with Don Hodel and preview his excellent new book on Chamaedoreas. Don gave us some interesting insights into the research, writing, and production of his book.

That afternoon we flew to Florida, arriving at 8:30 p.m. After collecting our baggage and organizing a hire car, we left the airport at 9:30. It was then that the accommodation shortage in Miami became apparent, as we spent the next four hours looking for a room. The hotels were full of builders, plumbers, insurance assessors, etc., all busy putting Miami and areas south back on its feet again. We eventually found a room in a less than perfect hotel in an area known as "Little Cuba."

After a good night's sleep (any sleep is good) we headed off on a week's trip to see as much of Florida as possible before the Biennial started.

We proceeded north from Miami, taking the scenic coastal highway A1A. As you headed out of Miami, the hurricane damage rapidly diminished and the Royal Palms [*Roystonea* sp.] looked normal again. We took a couple of days, overnighting at some nice little places, to reach the Kennedy Space Center at Cape Canaveral. *Sabal palmetto* is quite abundant up this coastline, also *Serenoa repens*, but in

fewer numbers. Passing through such places as Fort Lauderdale and Palm Beach, it's very obvious how much money is in the area as the houses are opulent and the landscaping wonderful.

After Canaveral, we turned west and had a day at Orlando, visiting the Epcot Center, also with some tasteful landscaping. After this, it was Tampa, Fort Myers and Naples on the Gulf Coast.

Fort Myers has more Royals than I have ever seen in one place—reputedly, 17,000 lining the avenues and highways. Naples is probably one of the nicest areas we saw in Florida—green, landscaped and with a nice atmosphere.

A quick 2½ hour drive across Florida on the Everglades Parkway (also known as "Alligator Alley") brought us back to Miami for the Bahamas cruise [an optional side trip of the IPS Biennial]. We passed literally millions of *Sabal palmetto* and acres of *Serenoa repens* on this drive. It was very interesting to see. For once we were early, and, while waiting at the dock we were approached by a man who noticed the palm tree motif on Lynn's T shirt. This man turned out to be Jim Cain [yours truly], who, we were later to learn, would be the next International Palm Society President. We had lunch at a nearby restaurant with Jim and his wife Elizabeth before departing on the "Brittanis" for Nassau. The cruise was uneventful except for "Manuel," the waiter. I know now who John Cleese based his character on in the show "Fawlty Towers."

"The Retreat," former home of Arthur and Margaret Langlois, and now administered by the Bahamian National Trust, is 11 acres of woodland east of Nassau. Palm Society members were led on a tour of the gardens, which are in the process of being rejuvenated by the Trust. Of spe-

cial note were *Syagrus amara*, *Pelagodoxa henryana*, *Gastrococcus crispera* (the Cuban Belly Palm), *Satakentia liukiensis*, *Copernicia macroglossa*, *Areca vestitaria* (formerly *A. langloisiana*) and *Phoenicophorium borsigianum*. Back in Miami, we headed for the annual "Palm Sale" [of the South Florida IPS Chapter] at Fairchild. The weekend sales were a record and totalled over U.S.\$70,000. Next a quick four hour drive to Key West. Nicknamed Cayo Hueso (Bone Island) by the Spaniards and later anglicized as Key West, it boasts the warmest climate in the continental U.S. It has a Bohemian atmosphere and is full of charm. Just driving to Key West is an adventure as you drive over 65 km of bridges including one 7 miles (11.2 km) long.

Back to Miami for the Welcome Party and the Biennial begins!

The first tour was to the garden of Erik Beers, northwest of Miami [in Broward County] and about 18 miles from the ocean. The 5-acre property has many mature specimens but is limited due to the freezing conditions sometimes encountered there. Erik has some nice *Coccothrinax crinita*, *Dictyosperma*, *Livistona*, *Sabal* (including a beautiful blue *S. uresana*) and *Latania*. He also has a small lake near the house surrounded by some stunning *Phoenix reclinata* × *roebelenii*. After Erik's, we traveled to Flamingo Gardens for a tour of the gardens [led by David barZvi] and dinner [BBQ and Key Lime Pie]. Flamingo has quite a few medium sized plants but in a few years will be quite something. *Ravenea*, *Neodypsis*, and *Livistona* were quite common. Dr. Alan Meerow presented a slide show and talked of his new book "Guide to Landscape Palms."

The following day, it was off to Fairchild Tropical Gardens for a day of lectures, lunch, more lectures, and then a garden tour with Chuck Hubbuch, Curator of Palms.

The next tour was to Palm Beach and the "summer house" of one of Florida's richest men. His house was actually on both sides of the coastal highway with a tunnel connecting the two halves. The house was undergoing extensive renovations and consequently many large palms were in large pots waiting to be put in the ground. A staff of three horticulturalists (1 orchid, 2 palm and cycad) looked after the garden. The collection will be of Caribbean species. A beautiful lunch was served at the Norton Sculpture Gardens where there is a fine collection of palms [put in and cared for by the Palm Beach Chapter of the IPS]—many young specimens but also some older ones. A lecture at Mauts Garden followed, by Barry Noblick on the palms of Brazil.

The final day saw two slide presentations by Don Hodel, one on "Unusual species and habitats of *Chamaedorea*," the other on "Palms of French Polynesia," centered on his mother-in-law's garden which he has planted with many rare and beautiful palms. This show took the format of showing the same palms in various years and so showing their rate of growth—with various family members for scale.

All in all, the Biennial was another great success and, given the problems associated with Hurricane Andrew, the organizers cannot be thanked enough.

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