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## The FCCJ Palm Garden

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Every chapter of the IPS needs a major purpose for its membership to add focus to chapter activities. For our chapter, the focus is the palm garden at Florida Community College Jacksonville (FCCJ). The garden was born from the collective desire to grow palms north of the tropics.

It is arguable what came first, the garden or the chapter. Perhaps the desire formed the garden and the garden begat the chapter. Certainly, the latent interest in the local membership was the energy for the chapter and the garden was the catalyst for the process. What is true for thermodynamics is true for palm societies I suppose.

In these very uncertain ecological times, the garden can be a time capsule for palms. Certainly, this is no substitute for responsible management and a garden can never be the answer for the biodiversity of a rain forest. However, a garden can be a repository against extinction for palms and cycads under high risk.

Surely it is better to preserve *Neodypsis decaryii* on its mountainside home or *Jubaeopsis caffra* in its Pondoland habitat or *Encephalartos cerineus* in its lonely Kraal. Unfortunately scarce resources, burgeoning populations, and political instability prevent developing nations from effectively managing their resources and the botanical resources are the casualties of these scenarios.

### The Beginning

Our garden was born with these lofty goals in mind. It was dedicated March 15, 1988. Two years of preliminary work including fund raising committees, landscape planning, and garden development predated the dedication.

The garden flourished over the next 1½ years under the patient and consummate leadership of Dr. Kyle Brown and the institutional support of Dr. Joan Hill and Earl Farris. This progress was punctuated by the efforts of James Menge and Earl Farris who obtained and planted a 70 year old 40' tall *Phoenix sylvestris* and stately *Phoenix dactylifera*. After only a year

and some days, the garden had over 25 species and included many mature seed-producing specimens. These served as verdant testimony to the efforts of a few dedicated palmophiles.

Christmas 1989, the progress of the garden was abruptly halted as the forces of the Arctic looked south. With this came another of the one too many Siberian Expresses which visited Florida during the 1980's. This plunged northern Florida into four days of blowing snow and sub 20° F temperatures. As the respondent I can only say the garden was defoliated and severely injured. With the freeze came a record drought which exacerbated the damage and allowed many plants to succumb to bud injuries. However in response to this, dead trees were removed, new trees planted and infirm trees nurtured. This freeze put the experimental garden to a test and the chapter responded to its first test.

### The Present and Plans for the Future

Four mild winters and wet summers have restored the garden to viability. Diligent efforts of the chapter and the college have enhanced the garden. A number of species have been added and the total number of plants is now at 54 species of palms and six species of cycads. Many plants are in seed. As I write, a comprehensive inventory and future planning for the garden is underway.

The FCCJ garden staff and our membership will not be content with just a collection of plants but seeks to establish small groves of critically endangered palms and cycads to serve as seed and restocking sources. Initially, these will include the formation of groves of *Phoenix theophrasti* and *Brahea edulis*. Future annexes for the garden are being discussed by the membership, which could serve as repositories for critically endangered species and as a source for future restocking. These annexes will increase the size of the garden to 25 acres.

A large fine arts complex is under construction with many plantings of palms programmed for

Table 1. List of palms in the garden.

<i>Acoelorrhaphe wrightii</i>	<i>Phoenix canariensis</i>
<i>Acrocomia media</i>	<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i>
<i>Acrocomia totai</i>	<i>Phoenix paludosa</i>
<i>Allagoptera arenaria</i>	<i>Phoenix roebelenii</i>
<i>Arenga australasica</i>	<i>Phoenix reclinata</i>
<i>Arenga engleri</i>	<i>Phoenix sylvestris</i>
<i>Arenga tremula</i>	<i>Phoenix theophrasti</i>
<i>Butia capitata</i>	<i>Rhapidophyllum hystrix</i>
<i>Butia</i> × <i>Syagrus</i>	<i>Rhapis excelsa</i>
<i>Butia</i> × <i>Jubaea</i>	<i>Rhapis humilis</i>
<i>Brahea armata</i>	<i>Rhapis subtilis</i>
<i>Brahea brandegeei</i>	<i>Sabal causiarum</i>
<i>Brahea edulis</i>	<i>Sabal domingensis</i>
<i>Chamaedorea microspadix</i>	<i>Sabal etonia</i>
<i>Chamaedorea radicalis</i>	<i>Sabal guatemalensis</i>
<i>Chamaerops humilis</i>	<i>Sabal mauritiiiformis</i>
<i>Cycas revolutii</i>	<i>Sabal mexicana</i>
<i>Cycas taiwaniani</i>	<i>Sabal palmetto</i>
<i>Dioon edule</i>	<i>Sabal yapa</i>
<i>Dion mejiae</i>	<i>Serenoa repens</i>
<i>Dion spinulosum</i> <i>Livistona australis</i>	<i>Syagrus romanzoffiana</i>
<i>Livistona carinensis</i>	<i>Syagrus</i> sp.
<i>Livistona chinensis</i>	<i>Trachycarpus fortunei</i>
<i>Livistona decipiens</i>	<i>Trachycarpus takil</i>
<i>Livistona mariae</i>	<i>Trithrinax acanthocoma</i>
<i>Livistona merrillii</i>	<i>Trithrinax brasiliensis</i>
<i>Livistona muelleri</i>	<i>Washingtonia filifera</i>
<i>Livistona saribus</i>	<i>Washingtonia robusta</i>
<i>Nannorrhops ritchiana</i>	

1995. This will be connected to the garden by board-walk through a wetland hammock (to be named Poet's Walk). This project was inspired by the late author and historian Mary Graff who generously contributed initial funding for the project to demonstrate her love and respect for nature. The wetland hammock will be augmented by plantings of rain forest palms such as *Ceroxylon* sp. *Chamaedorea* sp. *Rhopalostylis sapida*, *R. baueri*, *R. cheesemanii*, *Linospadix monostachys*, *Lepidorrhachis mooreana*, and *Laccospadix australasica*. Overhead fine mist systems will

be used to enhance the nutrient recycling between falling detritus and ground.

With these features, the garden will provide a three dimensional experience of the rain forest that will serve as an educational laboratory for the student who will not only be able to read about the rain forest but take a short walk (via Poet's Walk).

Lastly, the garden will serve as a source of inspiration for generations after our passing and stimulate future palm and cycad enthusiasts.

## CLASSIFIED

PALM SEED FOR SALE. *Rhopalostylis sapida* US\$50\1000; *Rhopalostylis baueri* US\$80\1000; *Chambeyronia macrocarpa* US\$300\1000. Also other New Caledonian species available from time to time, e.g., *Basselinia*, *Burretiokentia*, *Actinokentia*, *Moratia*, *Veillonina*, etc. Contact: BRYAN LAUGHLAND, 20 Vic Butler St., Mt. Roskill, Auckland, New Zealand. Phone: 64-9-6243709. Fax: 64-9-6257704.