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BACK COVER

A well grown specimen of *Asterogyne martiana*, as seen on the recent IPS Biennial trip to the Lyon Arboretum, Hawai'i. IPS members will be saddened to learn that the Lyon Arboretum is now closed to the public. See News from the Word of Palms, p. 160. (Photo by S. Zona)

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Another view of the same palm, *Asterogyne martiana*, shown on the back cover. (Photo by S. Zona)



NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF PALMS

During the IPS Biennial in Hawai'i last May, many IPS members were thrilled to see the spectacular palm collection at the Lyon Arboretum. We are now deeply saddened to learn that the Arboretum, operated by the University of Hawai'i, has been closed by UH officials as of 27 August 2004. Citing health and safety concerns, including structural instability of some buildings, electrical short-comings and safety of pathways, UH officials closed the Arboretum to visitors. One building is open to staff members to carry on Arboretum business and upkeep, but several other buildings are closed until further notice. In a statement released to the press, Jim Gaines, UH Interim Vice President for Research, said, "We are reluctantly closing the facility to public access pending a more in-depth inspection and review of the buildings and grounds."

The Lyon Arboretum contains many beautiful specimens of rare palms seldom, if ever, cultivated elsewhere in the USA. IPS Biennial attendees will remember Ray Baker's presentation and introduction to the Arboretum, highlighting its historic legacy and its tremendous palm diversity. We sincerely hope UH will be able to make speedy repairs and reopen the Lyon Arboretum so that the public can again enjoy this treasure of a botanical garden.

On a happier note, the recent spate of hurricanes in the Caribbean and Southeastern US seemed to have spared many of the area's botanical gardens. While we are concerned for IPS members and others who have suffered significant storm damage from Hurricanes Charlie, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne, we are pleased to report no irreparable damage at the following gardens: the Atlanta Botanical Garden, Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, Huntsville Botanical Gardens, Harry P. Leu Gardens, the Montgomery Botanical Center,

Marie Selby Botanical Gardens and the University of South Florida Botanical Gardens. Bok Tower Gardens, in Lake Wales, Florida, sustained some damage but has reopened. Dr. Angela Leiva, Director of the Jardín Botánico Nacional, Cuba, reported some losses in the palm collection, but redundancy in the collection prevented any species from being lost. The exception to this generally optimistic report is the Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park in the Cayman Islands; we have heard reports of near total devastation. We hope the garden and its staff make a speedy recovery.

Away from the tropics, in the calm, windless conditions of the great Palm House at Kew, *Attalea butyracea* flowered in May this year for the first time. While this may not seem to be particularly newsworthy, the palm in question is the most massive of all the palms in the Palm House collection, and it has grown lustily since it was planted there in 1984 after the glasshouse was restored. Now virtually reaching the roof but with a scarcely evident trunk, it is a spectacular sight. It thrust out an inflorescence bearing both male and female flowers, which in itself is unusual, as species of *Attalea* tend to have entirely male inflorescences when they flower for the first time. Male flowers on the Kew palm appeared to have empty anthers so fruit set is unlikely.

Folks in South Florida will soon have the opportunity to see one of the marvels of the plant world: the flowering of *Corypha umbraculifera*. A plant at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden is putting out an inflorescence, which will produce thousands of flowers and fruits. After the fruit ripen, the palm will die. The dramatic event and heroic climax are much anticipated. The last time one flowered at FTBG was in 1984.

THE EDITORS