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The strange, almost comical, trunks of *Coccothrinax spissa*, one of the palms to be found in the Dominican Republic. See article by L.A. Mera, p. 183. Photo by P. Craft.

### BACK COVER

*Pseudophoenix vinifera* growing in Azua, one of the sites that will be visited by the IPS Biennial 2006. See article by L. Mera, p. 183. Photo by Paul Craft.

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## NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF PALMS

As this issue of PALMS goes to press, two major palm collections, the Montgomery Botanical Center and Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, are reeling from the effects of Hurricane Wilma that swept across Florida on 24 October 2005. FTBG was closed to the public for a week, while teams of staff and volunteers cleared debris, salvaged palms and took herbarium and DNA samples from palms that could not be saved. Some palms were simply uprooted. Others died in several different ways: trunks snapped, terminal buds blown out or, worst of all, crushed by falling limbs of large trees. Damage seemed random and unpredictable. Healthy palms stood next to others of the same species that were snapped like match sticks. The lesson learned from previous storms – keep duplicate plantings in different areas of the garden – was hammered home by Wilma. Palm nurseries in South Florida also suffered greatly during the passage of Wilma. Many nurseries were just beginning to recover from this summer's previous storms, only to receive a devastating blow from Wilma. Likewise, private collections and home gardens in South Florida were bruised and battered by the storm. We are, however, more fortunate than IPS members along the Gulf Coast and Central America, whose gardens and houses have been utterly destroyed by this season's storms.

Two web sites of interest to IPS members have come to our attention. One, the brainchild of Dr. Carl Lewis of Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, is the Fairchild Guide to Palms at [www.fairchildgarden.org/palmguide](http://www.fairchildgarden.org/palmguide). The site focuses on the collections of palms at FTBG, including those not normally seen by visitors, such as the DNA collection and the herbarium collection, along with conservation status. The vast image gallery and the cultural tips will be of particular interest to palm enthusiasts in South Florida. Plans are afoot to expand the

Guide to include important palm collections in Hawaii and California.

A site by IPS member Julen Rojo Legarra of Spain, [www.ePalmetum.com](http://www.ePalmetum.com), is rich in palm history and taxonomic notes, with some text in English and some in Spanish. There is a very useful list of species and synonyms along with maps and images (although images of rare species are often missing). The site has good graphics and is easy to use. Mr. Rojo Legarra is to be congratulated for making such an attractive and content-rich site.

Many IPS members will be keen to get their copies of a new book by Rafaël Govaerts and Co-Editor John Dransfield, *World Checklist of Palms*, published by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. The book is a definitive list of genera and species of palms and their synonyms and distributions [a key to the geographic abbreviations, in Access 2.0 format, can be downloaded at <http://www.bgbm.fu-berlin.de/TDWG/geo/default.htm>]. The list is rapidly becoming the most consulted book on our shelves – if nothing more than to check spelling of scientific names!

A beautiful new book, *The Palms of Fiji*, has just arrived, hot off the press. Author Dick Watling is resident in Fiji and has provided a detailed and highly accessible account of all the islands' palms, each illustrated with elegant images reproduced from watercolors. The book will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue of PALMS and should be available via the Bookstore. We are sure many members will wish to obtain a copy for their palm libraries. Interestingly, and perhaps slightly unfortunately, just as the book appeared, complete with its account of *Alsmithia*, a paper appeared in *Novon* 15: 455–457, authored by Maria Norup, sinking *Alsmithia* into synonymy with *Heterospatha*.

THE EDITORS