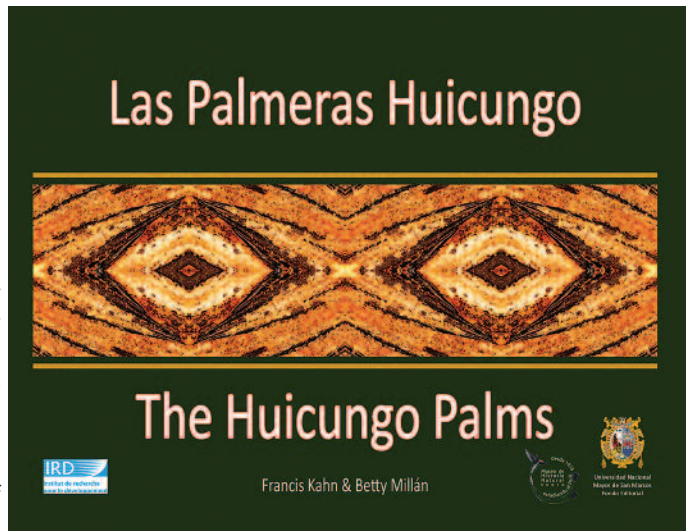


PALM LITERATURE

LAS PALMERAS HUICUNGO: THE HUICUNGO PALMS. Francis Kahn and Betty Millán. Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos and Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, Lima, Peru. Pp. 173, numerous color photographs and maps.

This beautiful book, measuring 21.5 × 28.0 cm, is a photographic guide to the members of section *Huicungo* of the spiny cocosoid genus *Astrocaryum*, most of the species of which occur in Peru. The book has parallel Spanish and English text. There is a brief introduction to the genus *Astrocaryum*, which is treated in the narrow sense, excluding *A. mexicanum* and *A. alatum* that are referred to the segregate genus, *Hexopetion*. A synopsis of the infrageneric classification of *Astrocaryum* is provided before the authors go on to discuss section *Huicungo* with its subsections. Detailed keys to the fifteen species of the section follow and then each species is given expanded treatment, complete with distribution map and diagnostic details, superbly illustrated throughout. The photographs comprise habitat shots, pictures of the whole palm, crown, leaf with leaflet arrangement, inflorescence and many close-up details of staminate and pistillate flowers and fruit. These wonderful close-ups provide



evidence for the distinctness of the species. The book is beautifully designed and altogether sumptuous, but I am left wondering how it will be used. It is too unwieldy to be taken in the field, so it will probably be consulted back at base. In a way, the book is a celebration of a group of spiny palms, not generally appreciated for their beauty; the authors, the recognized experts of the genus, provide abundant and fascinating evidence of the attraction of these important palms. Congratulations on the production of a most unusual palm book.

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