



THE INTERNATIONAL PALM SOCIETY

Nov. 2021

NEWSLETTER

Save the Species – Save the Rainforest: *Sabinaria magnifica* and the Rainforest of the Darién Gap

On April 15, 2013, the botanical world was astounded by photographs of an unusual and incredibly beautiful, palm with leaves resembling a butterfly's wings. Discoveries like this are exceedingly rare, and the scientific community, led by Dr. Rodrigo Bernal, immediately descended on the very perilous area known as the Darién Gap in a remote forested mountain range between Colombia and Panama. After several long hot and itchy hikes to this poorly accessible location, a new palm genus, *Sabinaria*, was born!

The scientific botanical community was immediately enamored with not only this palm but also, as described by Dr. Bernal, "the lush forests of the Sarranía, with its crystalline creeks and its jaguars and wonderful monkeys and toucans, the giant magnolias and the numerous and fascinating palms."



All photos courtesy of Dr. Rodrigo Bernal

Save the Species – Save the Rainforest: *Sabinaria magnifica* and the Rainforest of the Darién Gap

Salvamontes (<https://www.salvamontes.org/>), a nonprofit NGO closely aligned with several Colombian and foreign agencies, chose the unique and endangered Darién Gap as their second conservation project. Previously Salvamontes engineered a very successful conservation program at Alto de Ventanas, located in the northern cloud forest of the Central Cordillera of Colombia.

To preserve the Serranía, Salvamontes, with support from the IPS, will acquire about 100 hectares of rainforest at La Paloma camp, with an additional 130 hectares to follow. Not only will this result in the successful conservation of *Sabinaria magnifica* in habitat, but at least another 30 species of palms, along with the “jaguars and wonderful monkeys and toucans.”

Our Save the Species effort directly targets rainforest and habitat protection. To do so we will provide financial support to in-situ conservation, upkeep, and preservation. Acquisition of this patch of rainforest is the first step towards the successful conservation of this extraordinary palm genus. Additionally, we will continue to sponsor ex-situ conservation of *Sabinaria magnifica*. Furthermore, this fundraiser will enable researchers, such as Dr. Bernal and others, to continue their scientific inquiries.

The *Sabinaria magnifica* fundraiser will contribute toward saving this magnificent palm in habitat, and the diverse rainforest within the critically threatened Darién Gap. This fundraising event will be launched on Giving Tuesday, November 30 and concludes August 1, 2022. Please consider supporting our campaign.



PIMBY – Palms of the Seychelles Islands

Palms In My Backyard (PIMBY) was inaugurated in the aftermath of the pandemic mandated travel restrictions. This initiative sought to elevate the status of local plants (even “common” palms) perhaps previously overlooked in our quest for the exotic and rare. I hope that this appreciation of plants in our respective neighborhoods will not subside. However, the US officially reopened its borders on November 8 (after over 18 months), so thankfully this will be the final installment of PIMBY. We saved the best for last:

One Seychelles-obsessed palm-nut in South Florida has amassed a collection of all six endemic, monotypic genera right outside his door!

*Phoenicophorium
borsigianum*



PIMBY – Palms of the Seychelles Islands



Lodoicea maldivica



Verschaffeltia splendida

Roscheria melanochaetes



Nephrosperma vanhoutteanum



PIMBY – Palms of the Seychelles Islands



Deckenia nobilis

Palm Hero: Elvis Cruz

Long-time IPS member Elvis Cruz is the primary caretaker of the magnificent palmetum at Morningside Park, Miami, Florida, USA. This 3-acre garden was the defining element of the park's original design in 1953. However the park had deteriorated badly. The South Florida Palm Society adopted this jewel in the rough, and there are now nearly 200 palms representing over 125 species. The garden is enjoyed by the entire community. Elvis regularly conducts tours for school children and local horticulturalists.

Alarmingly the city is considering demolishing the ENTIRE garden. A public meeting will be held to discuss the fate of the Morningside Park Palmetum. If you reside in the Miami area, please try to attend and help protect this public treasure. **Monday, November 29, 2021, at 6 pm, at the Morningside Park community building: 750 NE 55 Terrace, Miami, FL 33137.**

For those of you who cannot attend in person, please consider expressing your support of the Morningside Park Palmetum by emailing Miami City Commissioner Ken Russell: KRussell@miamigov.com



Save the Date! IPS 2022 Biennial in Hawaii

The International Palm Society will host its biennial meeting in Hawaii October 9 through October 16, 2022. We look forward to meeting old friends, making new ones, and seeing and learning about palms!

Kulaniapa falls, Hawaii (photo by Manny Prieguez)



Parting Shot

A “four-headed” *Ptychosperma* species growing in a garden on the aptly named Palm Island, Miami, Florida, USA.

