



THE INTERNATIONAL PALM SOCIETY

Nov. 2022

NEWSLETTER

Philanthropy Issue

Save the Species

Giving Tuesday is November 29!

In this issue, we officially inaugurate the 2022 Save the Species campaign, targeting the ex-situ conservation of the critically endangered palm *Pritchardia woodii*, with the prescient words of poet laureate W. S. Merwin from his essay “The House and Garden: The Emergence of a Dream.” He wrote:

In my own lifetime I have seen the role of a garden, the very idea of a garden, not merely altered but reversed. Gardens, from the beginning (as the etymology of the word suggests), existed as enclaves designed and maintained to keep out the wilderness, to guard what was inside for human use or pleasure. Once it became possible for human beings to destroy environments anywhere on earth, the situation was turned around, and anyone who wanted to protect and save any remaining bit of the natural environment was acting in the role of a gardener—one whose purpose, at this point, was to keep encroaching human exploitation and disturbance out.



Pritchardia woodii in habitat, photo by Mike Opgenorth, Director of Kahanu Garden, NTBG.

This is a clarion call for ex-situ conservation and explains the rationale behind this year’s Save the Species campaign.

Pritchardia woodii is a critically endangered (IUCN Red List) species. It is endemic to Maui (and specifically to the Waiho’i Valley on the eastern edge of Haleakalā), and fewer than 500 individual plants remain in the wild. The habitat for this palm is characteristically wet forest with challenging terrain making conservation difficult. Seed predation by rats has resulted in declining populations.

Philanthropy Issue

Michael DeMotta, Curator of Living Collections at the National Tropical Botanical Garden (NTBG), wishes to establish an ex-situ collection at the Kahanu Garden located in Hana, Maui, which is adjacent to the natural habitat of *P. woodii*. Previous Save the Species campaigns have focused on habitat preservation. The situation in Hawaii is different, and we have chosen ex-situ conservation instead. Mike DeMotta explains:

These palms [*P. woodii*] are in the Hana Forest Reserve, which is managed by the state of Hawaii, so there is no active conservation of that mid-elevation wet forest. There is no encroachment; however, there is little to no recruitment of *Pritchardia* in-situ because of rats. Seed predation is unbelievable. In this case, what one sees in the field are small, relictual populations of mature individuals with no seedlings nor juveniles. Eventually the trees get old, senesce, and die. By capturing the genetic diversity that still exists, we can conserve the species ex-situ until the rat issue can be addressed. Hawaii is the extinction capital of the US. In situations where we can get ahead of the loss of biodiversity, we need to act!

I strongly believe this project is exactly what the poet W. S. Merwin was suggesting.



Mike DeMotta, pictured left, launched our 2022 Save the Species campaign with an impassioned and charismatic review of the native *Pritchardia* of Hawaii. (Photo by Cindy Adair)

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A History of the IPS Save the Species Campaigns

2020 Madagascar: *Tahina spectabilis* in partnership with RBG Kew, London. (See results page 8)

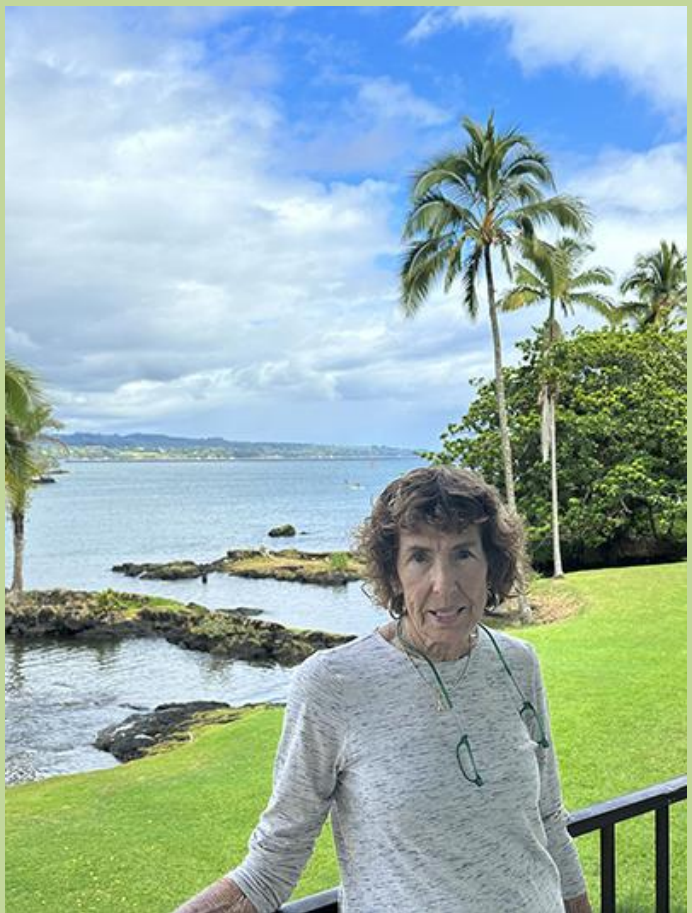
2021 Colombia: *Sabinaria magnifica* in partnership with Salvamontes.

2022 Hawaii: *Pritchardia woodii* in partnership with the NTBG, Maui.

Palm Hero 2022: Ms. Glenn Franklin

Each November the IPS Newsletter recognizes a Palm Hero. Essentially this award coincides with Giving Tuesday and acknowledges individuals effecting meaningful contributions in terms of time and/or money in support of important palm related activities. This year we have selected Glenn Franklin in recognition for her leadership in conservation and specifically for her philanthropic support of our Save the Species campaigns. Thank you, Glenn!

IPS Palm Heroes from past years include Drs. Kathy Grant and Tom Jackson (below, left), in 2020, for their ongoing support for the publication of *Palms*. In 2021, Mr. Elvis Cruz (below right) was recognized for creating, funding, and maintaining the Morningside Park Palmetum and providing learning experiences for students in Miami, Florida.



Thanks to HIPS for Hosting the IPS 2022 Hawaii Biennial!

by Rick Kelley, President of the Hawaiian Islands Palm Society

After the IPS 2022 Hawaii Biennial came to a close, HIPS present Rick Kelley sent this message to all those involved in organizing and executing a thrilling and memorable Biennial. We at the IPS also want to recognize and thank those people whose hard work and dedication made the event such a success. With Rick's permission, we are reprinting his message as a way of saying "thank you" to everyone involved. We also thank Rick for his part in pulling off a fantastic biennial meeting.

The 2022 International Palm Society Biennial tour to Hawaii wrapped up Saturday, October 16th. Over eighty visitors had a great time largely thanks to the outpouring of warm aloha from the local palm community. Since many of you may have seen only small segments of the overall operation, I'd like to share my gratitude to the generous work so many have contributed to showing the world how incredibly wonderful Hawaii really is.

I have to start with Jeff Marcus who was a motivating factor in IPS focusing in on Hawaii in early 2021 during the depths of the pandemic. Jeff was in constant contact with decision makers on the IPS board as they considered the feasibility of mounting the effort after the 2020 trip to Reunion Island had been cancelled. Jeff was fully committed to providing a strong educational component to the tour. He worked closely with Mary Lock to bring Dr. Wolf Eiserhardt all the way around the world to present his recent findings on the evolution of Madagascar palms to both the local HIPS audience in Hilo and again in Honolulu for the IPS. Jeff hosted Wolf at his new home at Floribunda and kept him busy collecting DNA samples of rare mystery palms in the garden. Jeff personally traveled to Oahu prior to the tour to arrange exclusive access to remote areas of Lyon Arboretum for the IPS. He then led the group on a day of hiking there, pointing out special palms. And of course, visiting Floribunda was one of the top highlights of the visitors' trips. Jeff and Suchin made sure everyone had a great day.

Besides Dr. Eiserhardt, the group got to hear our very own Dr. Don Hemmes tell about the long history of palms on the Big Island. Don is a former president of HIPS and planted the extensive collections of palms, cycads, and bromeliads at the University of Hawaii/Hilo Botanical Gardens as well as contributing to the palm and cycad collections at the Pana`ewa Zoo.

The tour would probably never have happened if former HIPS president and current webmaster Mary Lock had not stepped in to finalize key planning components. Mary was a smokejumper diving into one hot spot after another putting out fires all the while taking on the full responsibility of organizing the Maui pre-tour. Mary just joined the IPS governing board, with her proven organizational skills she will be an excellent recruit.

People came to see palms, and because Hawaii has lost essentially all its old growth forests, private gardens full of cultivated palms are where visitors needed to go. In addition to Jeff and Suchin's one-of-a-kind palm collection, the IPS also got to tour mature legacy gardens started by Donn Carlsmith, Jerry Hunter, Ken Foster, and Bo Lundkvist. Each of these botanical treasures has changed hands and the new owners generously opened their gardens.

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Although the original Donn Carlsmith estate was subdivided long ago, the four-acre section containing the best palm collection was recently purchased by Michelle and Ryan Rutan. Even though they only arrived on island this past summer, they have jumped feet first into the world of palms. Along with lots of help from Daniel Dayoan, who has worked in various capacities at the garden since the 1980s, the Rutans brought the garden back to its full glory in a remarkably short time. HIPS members Chris Friesen, Lise Dowd, Steve Forman, Stacy Williams, Allison and JR Miles, and David Longacre helped out on a couple of work days. We are also grateful to Mike McDonald and Greg Ewald from Hawaii Tropical Bio-reserve and Garden for sending in additional work crews. The result of all that effort was a showplace palm paradise when the IPS arrived last Wednesday. Many thanks go out to former HIPS president and 2004 IPS biennial organizer, Karen Piercy for helping Michelle with palm name tags and leading the tour. It was a beautiful day, and there is no other group in the world who could have appreciated the palm collection more. These people were the hardest of the hard core, and they were all appropriately blown away.

The former Jerry Hunter garden, known as Casa de Las Palmas, is now cared for by Irene Francis and Lars Woodruffe. HIPS is eager to bring our members to see this incredible property, but IPS got in first to enjoy a delicious catered lunch followed by a tour of the eye-popping garden trails. The tropical beauty of Casa de Las Palmas has been featured in tv series, weddings, fashion photo shoots, and Jason Dewees' palm landscaping book. One IPS visitor remarked that this garden will be the subject of discussion for many biennials down the road. Lars and Irene moved to the Big Island after long careers in television in New York City. It was a dramatic transition, but both they and the garden are thriving.

Bob Carrere and Andy Pesce lost the dream home where they planned to retire in the 2018 eruption. But when one door closes, sometimes a new door opens. They were able to purchase the property Bo and Karolyn Lundkvist began planting in the 1990s. The property only narrowly escaped the Leilani Estates eruption, but many of the palms suffered from the intense volcanic gases, acid rain, and coating of tephra. Bob and Andy have poured an incredible amount of work into the garden to bring it back to life. If they hadn't been told, none of the IPS visitors would have had any idea there had ever been a problem. Volcano? What volcano? Everything was in perfect condition the day of the tour. Bob and Andy even arranged for a passing light shower so visitors would know it is not blue sky and sunshine all day every day in East Hawaii. Former HIPS and IPS president Bo Lundkvist was on hand to provide an oral history of the garden and lead one of the groups through the many sections of the garden. Cindy Andersen and Sara Wagner arranged for a wonderful lunch at the pavilion.

There is an oft repeated joke that Jerry and Cindy Andersen bought a double coconut (*Lodoicea maldivica*) from Ken Foster and he threw in a house and garden as a bonus. The Andersens have dramatically expanded the garden and its palm collection over the years to the point it is a must see for any Big Island visitor interested in palms. This was a fitting dessert to end the tour.

And of course, there is one garden that will never change hands. IPS spent all of Thursday visiting Jeff and Suchin Marcus and marveling at the most incredible private palm collection in in the world. IPS members buy most of their palms mail order from Floribunda but getting to see it in person was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Local Big Island residents are spoiled by the easy access we enjoy, so it was fun to see how first-time visitors reacted when finally completing their pilgrimage to the palm Holy Land. And in another supernatural sign that something extraordinary was taking place, the last 0.7 mile of road was in perfect shape. Practically an interstate highway. The buses had no problem driving right up to the gate. If you are planning a shopping visit, do it now before the rain washes it all away.

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In addition to the private gardens, IPS visitors toured Hawaii Tropical Bioreserve Garden. The garden recently got new leadership. Mike McDonald and his staff rolled out the welcome mat for the IPS. They even made sure each and every visitor made it up the boardwalk and back on the buses, alive.

Hawaii Island has such an embarrassment of palm riches, there was no way we could show IPS visitors everything in just four days. In addition to the primary itinerary, many HIPS members opened their gardens to small groups of visitors on their free day. Hilo Orchid Society president Karl Mendonca put on his palm cap to show folks around his amazing place, even taking people on a hike to his 40 ft high backyard waterfall. Bill Austin, Mary Beth Cohen, Tim Brian and Bob Gibbens, David Davenport and Robert Welsch, Bo Lundkvist, Kim Cyr, and Mike Merritt also welcomed IPS visitors for whom the primary itinerary just did not have enough palms. These private garden visits were only possible because a small team of volunteer drivers shuttled visitors between gardens. Big thanks go out to Jerry McEwen, Angelica Covington, Chris Friesen, Amy and Paul Brotzman, and Lise Dowd for showing our visitors around and somehow staying on schedule. These exclusive access private visits were a special feature of this biennial.

In addition to the East Hawaii gardens, a large group traveled over to Kona on Friday to visit PalmTalk moderator Dean Ouer's and IPS board member Norm Bezona's gardens. HIPS has visited both gardens many times and always has a wonderful time. I'm certain the IPS group loved them just as much.

I apologize for anyone I neglected to thank by name. My brain is pretty darn fried at this point. It has been a lot of effort, but well worth it. I am incredibly impressed by the willingness of our members to contribute in any way needed. Not just for the IPS, but in our regular operations year in and year out. This is a fun group of palm nuts. I don't have any first-hand knowledge of other palm societies around the country, but it is hard to imagine any are more active than HIPS. There is no way the IPS biennial would have succeeded without the hard work of all of you.

Let's all do this again in 2040.

Upcoming Travel with the IPS

2023 IPS mid-term, Sunday, May 21–Thursday, May 25, London, UK:

Including RBG Kew, RHS Chelsea Flower Show and Wakehurst Place. Capacity 50.

2023 IPS Premium Travel, Sunday, October 29–Monday, November 6: Reunion Island (West Indian Ocean) Hosted by the Palmeraie-Union. Capacity 25.

2024 The International Palm Society's 33rd Biennial, Sunday, September 22–Monday, September 30: New Caledonia (Southwestern Pacific Ocean). Capacity 150.

Proposed Travel:

2025: IPS Midterm, Peru.

2026: The International Palm Society's 34th Biennial: Thailand.

Conservation in the News

The ecological catastrophes jeopardizing palms and forest habitat are being recognized worldwide. The small sampling below is representative of growing worldwide concern. The International Palm Society is proud to do its part.

This article in *Nature* highlights the world-wide threat to forests:

<https://media.nature.com/original/magazine-assets/d41586-022-02765-x/d41586-022-02765-x.pdf>

Prevent tree extinctions or face global ecological catastrophe, scientists warn | Trees and forests | The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/sep/02/tree-extinctions-species-wildlife-ecosystems-scientists-aoe>

Palms, in particular, are under threat. A recent article tells how a team of scientists assessed the conservation status of palms: <https://www.kew.org/read-and-watch/half-palms-at-risk>

Ethnobotanical threats: "The likely extinction of hundreds of palm species threatens their contributions to people and ecosystems." The original research article is available here: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41559-022-01858-0>

At Tate Modern, Cecilia Vicuña Mourns the Destruction of Rain Forests – ARTnews.com <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/artists/cecilia-vicuna-turbine-hall-commission-2022-tate-modern-1234642614/>

The art world has long been on the ecological vanguard. Chilean artist and poet, Cecilia Vicuña's, monumental installation in the great turbine hall at the Tate Modern (London) evokes desiccated forests. The artist explains: "it relates to mycelial networks and other non-human intelligences. "Brain forest is how the earth thinks of itself. The earth is the brain forest. And we're killing all the forests of the world—temperate, arctic, Amazonian, desert shrub—all of them are being murdered," said Vicuña. "It's time to wake up."

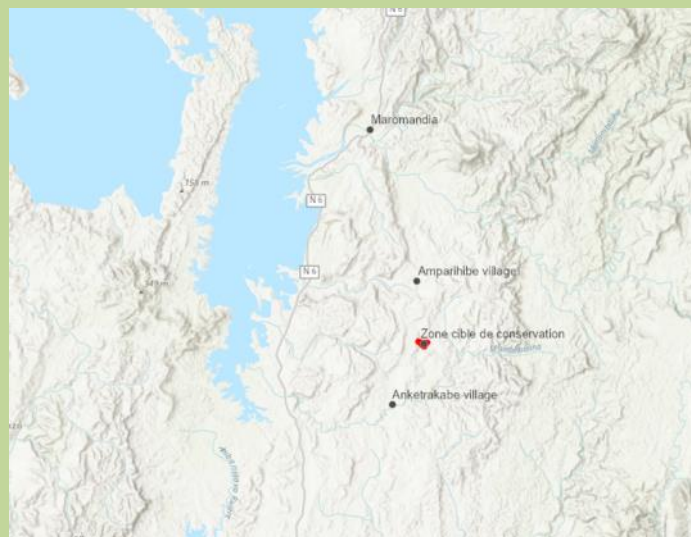


Report from an IPS Conservation Grant Recipient

The IPS is grateful for our many members who are dedicated to palm conservation. Your donations are making a difference! I am thrilled to share the results of the 2020 Tahina fundraiser here:

RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION OF *TAHINA SPECTABILIS* IN MAROMANDIA, NORTHWESTERN MADAGASCAR by H el ene Ralimanana, Kew Madagascar Conservation Centre

Before this project *Tahina spectabilis* was only found in an area in northwestern Madagascar, in the Analalava region. During a fieldtrip that the Kew Madagascar Conservation Centre (KMCC) did in the Maromandia region (more inland compared to the first area) in 2017 a new subpopulation was discovered. Since then, KMCC started to make further research in the area to study this new subpopulation and to look for solutions to protect its habitat which is under threat. Therefore, KMCC carried out activities on the site in close collaboration with local authorities and communities at the site (Fig. 1). To do this, the grant that we obtained from the International Palm Society contributed enormously to the realization of the main activities of the project: research on the distribution of *Tahina* in the Maromandia area, conservation of the subpopulation in the area and support for the improvement of livelihoods of the local population.



1. Location of the project.

1. Research and conservation of *Tahina*

Fieldtrips have been carried out in the area for doing more research on the distribution in the area and the inventory of *Tahina spectabilis* individuals. These fieldtrips led to the discovery of two new subpopulations. In total we found 1913 individuals of *Tahina* in the area of Maromandia in 263.820 Ha (Figs. 2 & 3). In securing plants at risk of *Tahina spectabilis*, a zone for the reintroduction of seedlings was selected and approved by the stakeholders, and 52 seedlings at risk were transplanted on 1.6Ha of forest of the same type as its habitat; aerial drone photos of the reintroduction area were taken during the transplant, and the project returned the materials used (4 basins) to the two communities that participated in the transplant.

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2. Population livelihoods

The climate in the region is marked with the four to six months dry season where there is a problem of water provision to communities and for the agriculture. As living in rural area, the communities in Amparihibe depend on subsistence agriculture and in the natural resources from the forest. In order to reduce the pressure to the habitat of *Tahina*, we also used the grant from the IPS for building a well in the village for providing water to the community (Figs. 4 & 5).

Yams are one of the products that communities collect in the forest during the famine season (period where rice is lacking). The KMCC staff also offered training on yam cultivation in the two villages, and we provided yam tubers to be planted in their own fields (Figs. 6 & 7).

2 & 3. Young individuals of *Tahina* recorded in Amparihibe forest



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4 & 5. A well built in Amparihibe village.



6 & 7. Household yam field and production during harvesting.

Acknowledgement

We are very grateful to IPS for the donation for supporting us to the conservation of the *Tahina spectabilis* in Amparihibe Maromandia. The communities in the area also transmit their thanks to the funder, they could access to water in the village due to the well built during the project, their yam production of the yams could also provide supplement of food for them.

Parting Shot

This year marks the 35th anniversary of the publishing the first edition of *Genera Palmarum* (authors Drs. John Dransfield and Natalie Uhl seen in photo taken by Dr. Phil Bergman during the IPS Venezuela Biennial, 1994). I am proud to note that the IPS initiated a true grassroots fundraising campaign, led by former IPS Vice President Pauline Sullivan, to provide (along with L.H. Bailey Hortorium, Cornell University) the money necessary to publish this beloved encyclopedic overview of the palm family. And our society's mission of research, education and conservation continues to inspire our members to support palm related activities to this day!

