

Changes in Latitudes Edition

Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden

Part 2

During my immensely enjoyable romp through the Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, I stumbled upon the South Florida Palm Society (SFPS) plant sale. Of course the benefits of being a member of an IPS affiliate are the plant sales and auctions. We are fortunate to have many generous growers who provide exceptionally rare and beautiful palms for our collections (and provide financial support for our local chapters). As a member of the Palm Society of Southern California (PSSC), I wondered what affiliate-sponsored plant sales looked like in Miami. Spoiler alert: sadly most of these plants will not grow in So. California. However I also appreciate that Floridians consider *Jubaea chilensis* to be a holy grail. In fact, Dr. Scott Zona, co-editor of *Palms*, named it his favorite palm despite not being able to grow it in Miami.

I've come to the realization that we Californians may be jealous of what Miamians can grow, but they are just as jealous of what we can grow in SoCal. And we are ALL jealous as those living in Hawaii as was readily apparent during the splendid 2022 Hawaii Islands biennial.



You never know who you might run into at a palm sale at Fairchild! PSSC/HIPS members, gracious hosts during the 2022 Hawaii biennial, and IPS benefactors Cindy and Jerry Andersen (providing scale for *Tahina spectabilis*).



At left, bona fide commitment to the cult of palms!

Obviously there were many plants to choose from with over 300 species of fabulous palms and many knowledgeable growers. Ultimately I selected 10 palms (and one cycad) to feature (and dream about taking home with me!).

Let's start with lots of coconuts. We all know they won't thrive in So. California (except in rare circumstances, such as the "world's most northern coconut," now sadly deceased in Newport Beach). *Cocos nucifera*, red spicata, dwarf form (below, left).

Licuala peekelii, from New Guinea. A fetching understory *Licuala* with a compact head of completely divided leaves (below, right).





Sabinaria magnifica (left) from the Darién Gap rainforest in Colombia. This palm was the star of the 2021 IPS “Save the Species” campaign. It is critically threatened in its habitat. Kudos to those who can grow it in cultivation and contribute to its *ex situ* conservation.

Iguanura multifida (below) from peninsular Malaysia. Another understory gem, appreciated for its bronze/red emergent leaf.



Cyrostachys renda (left). California palmophiles always crave color, and that’s why the apocryphal story of PSSC legend Pauline Sullivan (aka the “Palm Queen”) painting a crownshaft orange, only to call off the auction once a record price was achieved, is such a hoot. But the lucky palm-nuts in South Florida can actually grow this!

Salacca magnifica, a clustering member of the genus from Borneo, is prized for its long, stiff undivided leaves. Aptly named and truly magnificent! This (at right) was one of the higher-priced plants at \$350.

Below, a large selection of *Copernicia fallaensis*, perhaps the loveliest of the “big three” (the monicker given to *C. baileyana*, *C. gigas* and *C. fallaensis* by Cuban palm expert, author, and former IPS president Paul Craft).



Kerriodoxa elegans...who doesn't lust for the (yes) elegant black petioles and white leaf undersides?





Phoenicophorium borsigianum (left) is one of six monotypic genera from the Seychelles. I repeat, Seychelles!

Jorge J. Zaldivar, past president and Director, South Florida Palm Society (SFPS), Miami, Florida (below) mingling with the Obi form of *Hydriastele beguinii* (from Obi Island, Molukus, which were formally known as the Spice Islands and are now part of Indonesia). People have tried to grow this beauty in So. California, but it would probably be better suited as an indoor palm.



And one cycad: *Zamia pumila* (left), the only cycad native to the US (Florida and Georgia). It is hypothesized that this plant originated near the Crystal River. Native People likely spread its range, as it was a primary source of starch (first requiring a leaching process to extract neurotoxins). The "coontie" is the larval host for the endemic *Atala* butterfly, which is also endangered. This is one of the more affordable offerings in the sale at \$25

Save the Species 2023 Update

The 2023 Save the Species campaign was our most successful ever thanks to over 60 incredibly generous donors. The IPS raised more than \$37,000 for the conservation of currently endangered palms in the Comoro Islands. As committee chairman, your editor was humbled by this very kind letter of appreciation (at right) from Mr. Richard Barley, Director of Gardens, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

Donor Honor Roll

Ultra-Heroes (donations of \$10,000)

Anonymous
Glenn Franklin

Heroes (donations > \$1000)

Faith Bishock
Jeffrey Brusseau
Robin Clark
Gregg Hamann
Andy Hurwitz
Tom Jackson
Leland Lai
Boyd Marts
Romeo Montalvo
Colin Wilson
Palm and Cycad Society
of Australia

Royal Botanic Gardens
Kew

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Mr. Andy Hurwitz,
The International Palm Society,
1401 Lavaca St #751
Austin TX, 78701 USA

Monday 8th January 2024

Dear Mr. Hurwitz,

I wanted to write in my capacity as Director of Gardens at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew to thank the International Palm Society for all their fundraising efforts during the Save the Species Campaign. The total raised, which far exceeded our expectations, is a tremendous success and will play a critical role in progressing our conservation efforts for the endemic palms of the Comoro Islands – particularly the critically endangered *Ravenea moorei*.

As you will already know, the Comoro Islands are home to huge flora diversity and many of its species are endemic. However, its tropical environments are at significant risk as land continues to be cleared and few environmental protections are in place. I am reminded of the fragile beauty of its plantlife every time I step inside Kew's Palm House, where a lonely specimen of *Ravenea moorei* towers above most of the other residents.

Against this backdrop, our work to determine the wild status of the Comoro Islands' endemic palms could not be more urgent. The funds raised by the International Palm Society will be critical in enabling Dr. Bill Baker and his team of scientists from Kew and the Comoro Islands to devise a conservation action plan and provide the necessary training to protect these threatened species.

You might know that Dr. Baker and two of Kew's expert horticulturists travelled to the Comoro Islands late last year to undertake some initial fieldwork to determine the extinction risk of these palms. We are pleased to share here that the *Ravenea moorei* is not extinct in the wild. We can now begin to prepare a wider programme of assessment and conservation thanks to your support.

It was a great source of pride to watch your totaliser steadily climb throughout December. On behalf of everyone at Kew, and our partners in Comoro, I want to offer our thanks again for your fantastic efforts to highlight the plight of endemic Comoro palms. Please do pass on our gratitude to everyone who donated to the campaign.

With my very best wishes,



Richard Barley,
Director of Gardens – Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Patron: His Majesty King Charles III
The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew is an exempt charity.



“Be the change that you wish to see in the world.” — Mahatma Gandhi

Upcoming Travel with the IPS

Pre-Tour:

September 21, 2024 (Saturday)

Capacity 44

sold-out

waiting list at palms.org

Main Biennial:

September 22, 2024 (Sunday)
through September 30, 2024 (Monday)

Capacity 150

sold-out

waiting list at palms.org

Post-Tour

October 1, 2024 (Tuesday) through
October 5, 2024 (Saturday)

Capacity 15

Registration pending



Palm Related Forums, part 2: Facebook

On November 9, 2015 the Facebook page "International Palm Society Community" was launched to allow an additional method for palm lovers to communicate and for the IPS to share information. This popular social media platform offers an alternative algorithm to ask questions, meet new friends, learn about palm cultivation, and view a wealth of palm pictures. Now with over 10,000 registered users and about 10 new posts each day, the International Palm Society's Facebook community is growing steadily.



Parting Shot

In 1657, Richard Ligon, author of "A True and Exact History of the Iland of Barbadoes" wrote this about the Royal Palm:

"I believe there is not a more Royall (sic) or Magnificent tree growing on the earth, for beauty and largeness, not to be parall'd; and excels, so abundantly in those two properties and perfections, all the rest, as if you had ever seen her, you could not chuse but fall in love with her."
From Lucita Wait, in *Lasca Leaves* vol 8(2), 1958.

A copse of *Roystonea borinquena*, a palm native to Puerto Rico and Hispaniola, near Rincón, Puerto Rico.

