

FEATURED THIS MONTH:

Zamia roezlii

by Ernesto Rodriguez

Zamia roezlii is found in coastal lowlands of Colombia and the Pacific coast of Ecuador. Named in honor of Czech botanist Benedikt Roezl, some plants have been found inundated by high tides and soil has been described as brackish mud. The plant is very salt tolerable and does well in cold temperatures up to 35 degrees Fahrenheit. Some *Z.roezlii* have been growing well in Loxahatchee, FL and I am currently growing seedling specimens in Miami, FL.

This is a remarkable species and considered to be the most primitive of all Cycads. Trunk height can reach up to 23 feet and require a large area for planting. New flushes of leaves can be pink to red in color. Cones are produced throughout the year and female cones are the largest of the *Zamia* species. The spermatozoids are the largest of any Cycad known.

So far they have proven to be fast growing and do best under full shade. In less than one year three new flushes have occurred. *Z.roezlii* requires regular watering and unlike many cycads, it doesn't like to dry out. Replicating the natural soil composition is not necessary for growth, but from my experience, they prove to do best using ideal soil medium.

When I acquired my *Z.roezlii*, the soil was a base to alkaline mixture with heavy perlite and top layer of small peat rock. They grew well in that medium and showed decent growth results. When they out grew the 4 in. pots and needed to be repotted into one gallon pots, I changed the soil mixture in an attempt to recreate natural soil medium. Currently mixture consist of sphagnum peat moss, coarse silica, and perlite. The slightly acidic soil mixture retains moisture better and has proven excellent growing results as they have flushed twice in a shorter span.



Top:

Zamia roezlii adult specimen in Valle del Cauca, Colombia

Photo by: Michael Calonje



Zamia roezlii female cone in Valle del Cauca, Colombia

Photo by: Michael Calonje



Zamia roezlii seedlings in Miami, FL

Photo by: Scott Cohen

Right:

Zamia roezlii newly flushing leaves in Valle del Cauca, Colombia

Photo by: Michael Calonje

