

PALM BEACH PALM & CYCAD SOCIETY

LOCAL CHAPTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL PALM SOCIETY

Monthly Update

January 2009

FEATURED THIS MONTH ENCEPHALARTOS FEROX



Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society Officers

Betty Ahlborn, President
Tom Ramiccio, First Vice President, Sales
Marshall Dewey, Second Vice President, Planting
Dale Holton, Third Vice President, Programs
Ruth Sallenbach, Secretary
Ingrid Dewey, Treasurer
Dennis McKee, Membership Chairman
Brenda Beck, Editor & Historian

Appointees

Charles Beck, Librarian
Marty Dougherty, Web Master
Ruth Lynch, Refreshment Chairman
Kitty Philips, Activities & Events Coordinator



Cardinal's nest nestled in an Encephalartos ferox

Photograph by Charlie Beck

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This Month's "Thank You"

Membership Meeting Refreshments

Thanks to all the members who attended the holiday party and brought all that delicious food.

Plant Give-away

Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society

A Special Thank You

To Betty Ahlborn for acquiring, repotting, caring for, and transporting all those free give-away plants.

Plant Auction Donations

Betty Ahlborn
Don Bittel
Jack Dewey
Marshall Dewey

Merle Guiliano
Dale Holton
Ted Shelton

UPCOMING MEETINGS

GENERAL MEETING

- Date:** Wednesday, January 7, 2009
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Location: Mounts Botanical Garden
Speaker: Michael Calonje
Subject: Search for *Zamia prasina* in South Belize
Note: Michael Calonje is a cycad biologist at Montgomery Botanical Center

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

- Date:** Wednesday, January 28, 2009
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Location: Ruth Sallenbach's Hone
6285 S. Military Trail, Lake Worth
(561) 965-5430

REMINDER: There will be no Executive Board Meeting in December 2008.



An upcoming issue will feature *Neoveitchia storchii*. Please share your photographs and growing experience with this palm. E-mail your photographs and information to beck4212@aol.com

GROWING ENCEPHALARTOS FEROX IN PALM BEACH COUNTY

Submitted by Charlie Beck

This beautiful cycad, which is native to South Africa, grows well in Palm Beach County. In a publication produced while he was with the University of Florida Miami-Dade Extension, Jody Haynes stated that this cycad is one of the most sought-after and unusual cycads in South Florida.

Our garden soil consists of a few feet of sand over a layer of hardpan. This is typical pineland flatwood habitat found in Palm Beach County. Since our yard is prone to flooding, I raised the ground level by creating a small mound to plant this cycad in 1997 from a seven gallon container (See photograph on page 11). Even planted on this mound, the cycad still experiences flood conditions during periods of heavy rain. This inundation does not set back growth of the cycad. While the cycad was originally planted in full sun, it is now in partial shade.

Care of this cycad is limited to irrigation and fertilization. I do provide supplemental irrigation during dry periods at a rate of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch of water applied twice

a week. I fertilize the cycad three times a year with Palm Special analysis as recommended by the University of Florida. No micronutrient deficiencies have been observed on this cycad.

The stems and leaves of this cycad are impressive. My cycad stem is 22 inches in diameter and 18 inches tall. The leaves on my plant grow up to six feet long and the leaflets are dark green and sharply barbed.

Both male and female cycads usually produce one to three cones but older plants can produce more. The color of male cones can range from yellow to scarlet and the color of female cones can range from yellow to bright red. While my female plant produced a cone after seven years, it now produces three bright red cones 11 years after planting. The cones measure a base diameter of eight inches and a length of 16 inches. These cones are showy for several months of the year. While the female cones will always pro-

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2008 HOLIDAY PARTY A HUGE SUCCESS

Most Palm Society members were able to attend the holiday party this year and the company and food were exceptional. The Palm Society outdid itself with the plant give-away. There were more than 150 plants that were given away to members, and each attendee left with at least three plants.



Members checking out the free plants





Tom Ramiccio, Kitty Philips and Dale Holton



Members checking out the food. Too many choices!



Terri Lynch going up for a free plant

President's Message

It is the end of one year and the beginning of a fresh new year. Where did 2008 go? It seems like it was just a few days ago that we were looking forward to the last new year. A new palm was discovered in Madagascar and Genera Palmarum 2 will be out shortly. I wonder if I will be able to understand the new book better than the old. The Palm Beach Palm and Cycad Society has several new members and 2 exciting additions to the board of directors. Tom Ramiccio has some great ideas as our new sales chairman and Brenda Beck is doing an outstanding job with our newsletter. Look for some exciting changes to come.

The weather has really kept us guessing the last quarter of the year. Do we cover up or not? Should we bring in the tender seedlings or will they be ok? My low so far has been 45 and so far everything is fine. I did crank the hot tub up to 90 degrees a few nights and set seedling Cyr-

tostachys on top but the larger containers were too big to move. Everything is fine so far but the cold could be lurking around the corner. My philosophy is to try a plant a couple of times and if I can't grow it, let those who can do it. Our plants should be well hardened off now and better prepared for January and February.



I do want to thank everyone who participated in our sales, rambles, picnic, and Holiday Party.. Whether you helped at a function or just attended, thank you. Our club is what we,

the members, make of it and we welcome everyone to do what they feel able to do. I look forward to serving you in 2009 and seeing you at meetings and events. If you are a new member please introduce yourself to me. I am horrible with names but do remember faces.

Remember, there is always room for another palm (or cycad).

Betty Ahlborn



**Palm Society
Board members
extend our wishes
for a happy and healthy
new year
to our friends
in the Palm Society
and to their families.**

Encephalartos ferox Continued from page 5

duce seeds, they are not viable unless they have been successfully pollinated.

According to Loran M. Whitlock, these cycads rarely sucker from the base. However, our cycad is producing one pup.

This cycad sustained no damage during the three Category 1 hurricanes we experienced.

ADDITIONAL ECEPHALATOS FEROX FACTS:

- I have noticed cardinal's successfully nesting on the leaflets (See page 2). The sharp barbs on the leaves discourage raccoons and other predators from disturbing the

nest.

- The stems, with pith that is almost pure starch, are processed into flour and used in food in Mozambique.
- Baboons, vervet monkeys, fruit-eating bats and birds eat the fleshy cover of the seeds in Africa.
- The University of Miami School of Medicine has looked at extracts from this cycad that may be efficacious in treating estrogen-dependent tumors.
- The South African Botanical Diversity Network has this cycad listed on its list of threatened plants.

References:

South African National Biodiversity Institute Website

Whitlock, Loran M. - The Cycads

Haynes, Jody. University of Florida, Miami-Dade. Cycads in the S. Florida Landscape: <http://miami-dade.ifas.ufl.edu/old/programs/fyn/publications/cycads-in-the-south-florida-landscape.htm>

SABONET News 9.1:42. South African Botanical Diversity Network. http://www.sabonet.org.za/threatened/threatened_mozambique.htm

Maria T. Kowalska, Yossef Itzhak and David Puett. Journal of Ethnopharmacology, Vol 47, Issue 3, 28 July 1995, Pages 113-116. Presence of aromatase inhibitors in cycads <http://www.sciencedirect.com/>

ENCEPHALARTOS FEROX GROWTH



1997 (Yardstick on left)



2008 (Yardstick on right)

Photographs by Charlie Beck

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