Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society

Local Chapter of the International Palm Society

Monthly Update July 2009

FEATURED THIS MONTH: *Sabal mauritiformis*

Left: Figure 1

Sabal mauritiiformis planted in the Beck garden 16 years ago.

Right: Figure 2

Brenda Beck and granddaughter Ashley with Sabal maufitiformis leaf.

FRONT COVER: Dale Holton with a Sabal mauritiformis growing in his garden.

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VISIT US AT palmbeachpalmcycadsociety.com

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Opinions expressed and products or recommendations published in this newsletter may not be the opinions or recommendations of the Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society or its board of directors.

FEATURED THIS MONTH: *Sabal mauritiformis*

by Dale Holton

This palm can be found from Central Mexico to Venezuela and Trinidad, excluding El Salvador and Nicaragua. I also have seen this palm growing in Panama. They can grow to a height of approximately 60 feet with a one foot diameter trunk. The leaves are a bright green on top and silver underneath. They grow somewhat slowly for the first 10 to 12 years, and then begin growing quite quickly.

When small, the plant should be grown in a somewhat shady and protected area. The leaves are easly broken in windy locations.

When small, *Sabal mauritiformis* looks somewhat like a large Licuala. I believe this is the most attractive of all the *Sabals.*

The Indians in Belize treasure this palm for roofing material. A well done roof will last for 7 to 8 years. When the Indians can't get enough *Sabal* leaves, they substitute with *Attaleya cohune*. On my many trips to Belize, I found that the *Sabals* were either quite small or very tall. Very few intermediate size plants were seen. I have been told that the younger Indians cut the palms down to get the leaves rather than climb them. They also most likely eat the cabbage.

I highly recommend this palm. Plant a second one when the first is 6 or 8 years old so that when the first one gets too tall for you, you can cut it down and eat it.

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FEATURED THIS MONTH: *Sabal mauritiformis*

by Charlie Beck

Sabal mauritiiformis rates in my top five palmate palms. Like *Corypha umbraculifera*, this palm is most impressive when young. The size of its crown has a tendency to shrink as the stem gains height. This *Sabal* looks its best when planted in the shade but will also grow in full sun.

I planted two specimens 16 years ago. Even though both were planted in similar conditions, they have grown at different rates. The faster growing palm has a 12 inch diameter by 20 foot tall trunk. The 26 foot diameter canopy area of this palm is much smaller than its juvenile stage. The second specimen has a 7 foot tall stem but the crown of fronds is much larger. Leaves measure 10 feet in diameter and are displayed on 13 foot long petioles—an impressive sight (see Figures 1 and 2 on page 2). If you don't have the room to plant a *Corypha umbraculifera*, impress your neighbors by planting this unique palm. I guarantee it will draw a lot of attention. None of the photos in books capture the beauty of this palm.

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GROWING CONDITIONS IN OUR GARDEN FOR *Sabal mauritiformis*	
Location	4 miles from ocean in suburban Lantana
Soil	Sand over a layer of hardpan (pineland flatwood habitat)
Irrigation	¾ inch applied twice a week
Flooding	Periodic inundation in sandy soil acceptable
Fertilization	3 times a year with Palm special analysis
Light	Sun/partial shade
Micronutrient Deficiencies	None observed
Insect Damage	None observed
Hurricane Resistance	Good

SOME GENERAL FACTS ABOUT *SABAL*

by Brenda Beck

- The genus *Sabal* can be found growing in the United States, Mexico, Bermuda, some Caribbean Islands, Panama, and northern South America.
- This palm can grow on any type soil and can thrive on coastal dunes, tidal flats, savannas, and shaded swamps.
- There are 16 species of *Sabal*. They include *S. bermudana, S. causiarum, S. etonia, S. maritime, S. texana, S. minor, S. pumos, S. uresana, S. blackburniana, S. domingensis, S. ghiesbreghtii, S. mauritiiformis, S. miamiensis, S. palmetto, S. rosei, and S. yapa*.
- *S. Etonia, S. Minor, S. Miamiensis, and S. Palmetto* are all native to Florida. However, some people believe that *Sabal miamiensis* is now extinct in habitat. Also, Texas Phoenix Palm Decline, which cannot be treated, is killing *Sabal palmetto* and could place this palm at risk.
- Man has found various uses for Sabal palm. The leaves are used to make hats and thatch roofs. Also, the timber is sometimes used for the construction of piers and buildings.
- The State of Florida has designated the *Sabal palmetto* as the State Tree.

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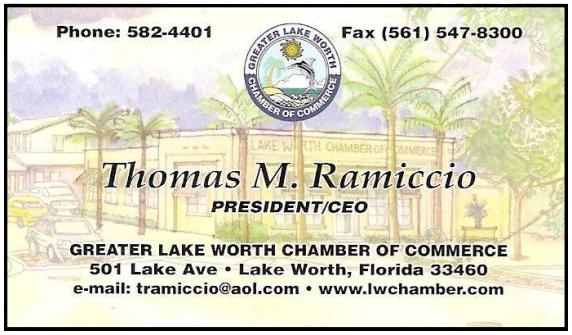

UPCOMING MEETINGS

GENERAL MEETING

Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2009

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Mounts Botanical Garden

Speaker: Dr. Monica Elliot, Professor of Plant Pathology at University of Florida IFAS Ft. Lauderdale Research and Education Center

Subject: Common Palm Diseases

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

7865Date: Wednesday, July 29, 2009

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Ruth Sallenbach's Home

6285 S. Military Trail, Lake Worth

(561) 965-5430

PALM NUTRITION

by Brenda Beck

Craig Morell, Director of Pinecrest Gardens, was the guest speaker at the June 3, 2009, general membership meeting. Pinecrest Gardens, formerly known as Parrot Jungle, is an 18-acre garden located at 5855 SW 111th St. in Pinecrest Gardens, Florida. The garden was purchased by the Village of Pinecrest in 2002. Mr. Morell, who has approximately 30 years experience growing palms, talked about palm nutrition.

Craig Morell

He declared that plants grown in containers should be treated differently than those planted in the landscape. A fertilizer specifically formulated for use in containers should be used. Fertilizers such as Dynamite or Nutricoat are excellent. He suggested that the fertilizer be placed on the soil and then covered with mulch to minimize weed growth, keep the plant moist, and to assist with release of the fertilizer. In addition, he suggested that the soil in containers be replaced every year or so. He noted that the soil in containers compresses over time which reduces the oxygen available for roots.

Mr. Morell presented the idea of having sentinel plants placed throughout the garden to provide a gage on the health of your garden. Plants like heloconias, hibiscus, and gardenias are plants that will be the first to show signs if your garden soil is lacking in nutrients or micronutrients.

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Winner of the June 3rd Name Drawing Prize
was Jeff Hutchinson
who was present. He received a Palm Society tee shirt.

This Month's "Thank You"

Membership Meeting Refreshments

Debbie Anderson
Larry Davis
John Gallagher
Ruth Lynch
Maryann Marino
Tom Ramiccio
Ruth Sallenbach

Plant Donations

Dale Holton

Please share stories regarding your garden experiences. Submit your stories and photos to beck4212@aol.com

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When choosing a fertilizer, Mr. Morell suggested that the nitrogen content should be less than 10, phosphorous should be a close to zero as you can find (not needed in sandy soils), and potassium should be more than 12.

Mr. Morell stated that iron deficiency is the most common problem for palms. Iron deficiencies can result from cold temperatures. Specifically, if the soil temperature falls below 65 degrees, an iron deficiency can result. To combat this deficiency, he stated that iron should be sprayed on the leaves of the affected plant.

To supplement regular fertilization, Mr. Morell shared a mix that he formulated to be sprayed on plant leaves and on the soil to keep plants healthy and lush and minimize micronutrient deficiencies. He suggested that the garden be sprayed with this formula four times a year.

	Commercial Use per 100 gallons	Home Use per gallon
Key-Plex 350	3 qts	3 tbsp.
Potassium nitrate	2 lbs.	2 tbsp.
20-10-20 fertilizer	2 lbs.	1 tbsp.
Manganese liquid	3 qts.	3 tbsp.
Epsom Salt	2 lbs.	2 tbsp.
Liquid soap	Squirt	Squirt

Mr. Morell cautioned that Key-Plex 350 will stain anything it comes into contact with so caution should be taken when spraying. He also noted that the liquid soap added to this formula acts as an insecticide and assists with even distribution of the fertilizer.

For more information on Pinecrest Gardens you can visit their website at www.pinecrest-fl.gov/gardens.htm.

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Above: *Sabal mauritiformis* growing in habitat. Photograph was taken by Dale Holton in March 1994 in Darian Panama.

Right:
***Sabal mauritiiformis* trunk.**

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