



Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society

Affiliate of the International Palm Society

Monthly Update

November 2009

FEATURED THIS MONTH: *Encephalartos gratus*



Encephalartos gratus male cone
Photograph by Dale Holton



Encephalartos gratus growing
at Flamingo Gardens
Photograph by Charlie Beck



Encephalartos gratus planted in the Beck garden in 1993.
Photograph by Charlie Beck

FRONT COVER: *Encephalartos gratus* growing in Dale Holton's yard.
Photograph by Dale Holton

Palm Beach Palm & Cycad Society Officers

Betty Ahlborn, President (561) 722-8106
Tom Ramiccio, First Vice President, Sales (561) 582-5915
Marshall Dewey, Second Vice President, Planting
Dale Holton, Third Vice President, Programs (561) 965-6792
Ruth Sallenbach, Secretary (561) 965-5430
Ingrid Dewey, Treasurer
Dennis McKee, Membership Chairman (561) 642-3015
Brenda Beck, Editor & Historian (561) 963-5511

Appointees

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

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**ELECTION OF 2010 OFFICERS TO BE HELD
AT THE NOVEMBER 4TH GENERAL MEETING**

We hope you will all come out to vote for 2010 Palm Society officers at the November meeting. The following slate of officers has been proposed by the Nominating Committee. However, the floor will be open for additional nominations prior to the election at the November meeting.

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
Elise Moloney, Membership Chairman
Brenda Beck, Editor

Appointees

Charles Beck, Librarian
Anthony Dougherty and Marty Dougherty, Web Masters
Ruth Lynch, Refreshment Chairman
Kitty Philips and Susan Cioci, Activities & Events Coordinators
Brenda Beck, Historian



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BETTY AHLBORN

Exotic Palms
&
Tropicals

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Loxahatchee, FL 33470

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Steven Aberbach
Cliffe Campbell
Doyle Cochran
Judie Tippett
Tom and Mary Whisler

FEATURED THIS MONTH: *Encephalartos gratus*

by Dale Holton

This cycad was first discovered in 1899, in Malawi, a landlocked country in southeast Africa. In Latin, the word "gratus" means pleasing or welcome. The natural habitat for this cycad is rocky ravines and river banks, and sometimes grows with no apparent soil. The plants are frequently defoliated by annual grass fires. They grow at elevations of 2,200-3,000 feet, with annual rainfall of 39-69 inches. *E. gratus* is most closely related to *E. hildebrandtii*. These plants enjoy full sun, although they will grow in shade. They will tolerate extended rainfall quite well.

This is an easy plant to grow and requires minimal care. They do get quite large over time and should be located in a spot where they won't interfere with walkways. The mature leaves can be as much as 6-10 feet long and are dark green. *E. gratus* is a very fast grower and in just 6-8 years can have a trunk more than 12 inches wide and more than

12 inches tall. There is an old plant in Fairchild Tropical garden that would take about four people to put their arms around it.

E. gratus was one of my first cycads. In about 1991, I planted three small plants on the south side of my house. Not really understanding how large they got, I planted them too close together and too close to the house. Now I need to move one plant and move and sell another plant as I have two males and one female. I most likely will do the moving this winter as its best done during cooler weather to avoid rot problems.

The male cones are a dark brown with yellow on the inside, and the female cones are orange. The male plants can produce several cones at one time and the female plants usually produce one cone until they get large, then they can produce one or more cones. Each female cone can have 300-400 seeds. With hand pollination, fifty percent or more will grow.

This is an excellent plant for anyone who has the room. They can usually be obtained from any nursery that sells cycads.



Caribbean Palms Nursery

Mike Harris
1584 F Road
Loxahatchee, FL 33470

Phone: (561) 792-0333
E-mail: palmz@gate.net

RECENTLY AVAILABLE "BAMBOO-LIKE" *DYPISIS*

by Charlie Beck

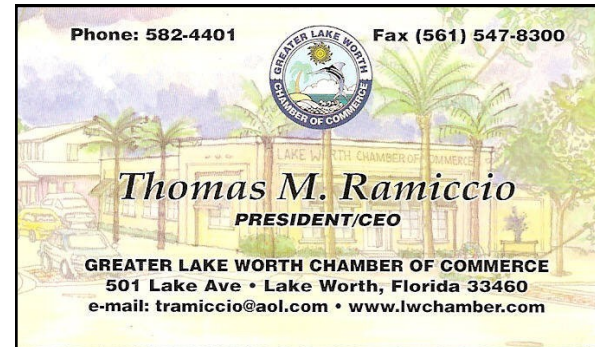
Many *Dypsis* have become available within the last 10 years but some are not well-suited for growing in Palm Beach County. However, I have found that *Dypsis* palms which grow in white sand habitat in Madagascar do grow well here. Two of these have striking bamboo-like trunks – one white and one black. I'll share my growing experience with these beautiful small palms. No photos of these palm are shown in *Palms of Madagascar*.

Dypsis psammophila grows naturally in low canopy rainforest on coastal white sand in Madagascar. It is reported in critical conservation status with a small distribution area. This palm is clustering and grows up to 12 feet tall. The stems emerge

green but turn jet black as they age. My specimen was planted four years ago and does not appear to be an aggressive clumper so it will not consume a large area. The fronds are five feet long with thin leaflets. The tallest stem is just over one inch in diameter and is 5.5 feet tall. The ringed black stem rivals the beauty of any black bamboo I have ever seen.

Dypsis scottiana var. *affinis* also grows naturally on the white coastal sands of Madagascar. It was formerly named *Neophloga affinis* but was combined with *D. scottiana*. *D. scottiana* var. *affinis* looks very different from *D. scottiana* shown in *Palms of Madagascar*. *D. scottiana* var. *affinis* has up to 47 leaflets per side where *D. scottiana* has 11 to 19 much wider leaflets per side. My oldest specimen is seven years old. The stems are almost two inches in diameter and the oldest stems are eight feet tall. These palms

(Continued on page 8)



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Greater Lake Worth Chamber of Commerce

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PRESIDENT/CEO

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Winner of the October 7th Name Drawing Prize
was **Steven Aberbach** who was present.
He received a M. Espinosa numbered print
of a *Pseudophoenix ekmanii*.

IMAGES OF 2009 FALL PLANT SALE

provided by Brenda Beck and Elise Moloney



Palms & Cycads Everywhere



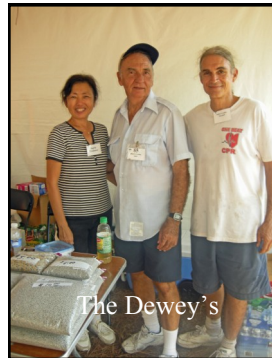
Kitty Phillips & Betty Ahlborn



The Croci's



Roland Grondin
Volunteer



The Dewey's

HOLTON NURSERY
PALMS and CYCADS

5221 3rd Road
Lake Worth, FL 33467
Phone (561) 965-6792
Email cycadnut@gate.net

"By appointment only"

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

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reportedly grow to 12 feet tall. The stems are ringed and are chalky white which resemble a blue bamboo. The graceful arched fronds measure five feet long and have droopy leaflets that are very distinctive.

Both of these palms are readily available and are easy to grow in a shaded location. By planting these palms you can have the beauty of bamboo without the aggressive maintenance required with bamboo.

See photographs of *Dypsis psammophila* and *D. scottiana* var. *affinis* on page 11.

GROWING CONDITIONS IN OUR GARDEN FOR <i>Dypsis psammophila</i> and <i>D. scottiana</i> var. <i>affinis</i>	
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	Shade
Micronutrient Deficiencies	None observed
Insect Damage	None observed
Hurricane Resistance	Good

(561) 586-2332

LAKE OSBORNE ANIMAL CLINIC

JOHN T. LYNCH, D.V.M. 1502 Lake Osborne Dr.
Lake Worth, FL 33461

UPCOMING MEETINGS

GENERAL MEETING

Date: Wednesday, November 4, 2009
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Location: Mounts Botanical Garden
Subject: Tropical Conifers: Jurassic plants in nature and in the garden
Speaker: Chad Husby, Doctoral Student, Dept. of Biological Services at Florida International University

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

Date: Wednesday, November 25, 2009
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Location: Ruth Sallenbach's Home
6285 S. Military Trail, Lake Worth
(561) 965-5430

THIS MONTH'S "THANK YOU"

General Membership Meeting Refreshments

Charlie & Brenda Beck	Ruth Lynch
Elise Moloney	Tom Ramiccio

Plant Donations

Jack Dewey	Dale Holton
Mike Harris	

A COMMUNITY USES MICROCHIPS TO THWART PLANT THEFTS

by Brenda Beck

In October 2009, the Riverside County Sheriff's Department in Coachella Valley, California reported that they are experiencing a problem with thieves stealing valuable plants. They cited young date palms as a primary target for thefts.

The Southern Coachella Valley Community Services District Team is working with local growers to reduce tree and plant thefts. The solution – implant microchips into agricultural products. The microchips, which are slightly larger than

a grain of rice, are implanted into plants. A hand-held scanner can be used to check plants suspected of being stolen and the owner of the tree can be identified from a database. Microchips are being purchased from Veri-Chip Corporation in Delray Beach, Florida.

For more information, you can go to: <http://www.instantriverside.com> and search the site for veri-chip



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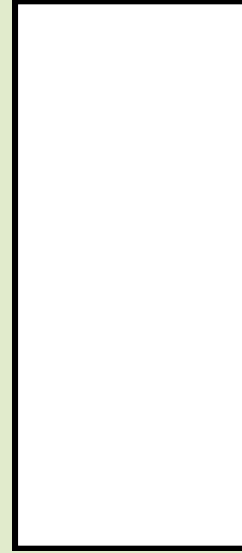
Dypsis psammophila



Dypsis scottiana var. *affinis*



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Encephalartos gratus female cone
Photograph by Dale Holton