



President's Message



At the time of writing, the county has not reopened Aunty Sally's meeting hall. We have Friday, February 10, 2023 reserved for our annual banquet and rare palm auction, but we don't know if the facility will be open then. The board is following this closely to see if we can move ahead as planned, or if we need to postpone the event, or move to another venue. We

will make an announcement as soon as we get more information.

As we wrap up 2022, I'd like to point out how the HIPS board has been spending your money to promote our primary missions of education, conservation, and encouraging cultivation of rare palm species. We spent over \$2300 bringing in top palm experts to present their research results. In October we flew in Dr. Wolf Eisenhardt from Denmark to explain how his team used DNA sequence analysis from over a hundred Madagascar species to understand the evolutionary history of this complex group of palms. The main conclusion was that the nearly two hundred species previously lumped together as *Dypsis* actually fell in two very distinct groups. Time for new name tags. We will bring back Dr. Bill Baker from Royal Botanical Garden, Kew, UK to present his latest research February 3, 2023.

We also spent a little over \$3100 on conservation projects within Hawaii. We donated to the [International Palm Society's Save the Species project](#) focused on expanding the threatened population of *Pritchardia woodii* on Maui. We also supported the work of [Amy Greenwell Ethnobotanical Garden](#) in Captain Cook to propagate rare native *Pritchardia* species right here on the Big Island. And we again donated to the Botanical Gardens at University of Hawaii at Hilo to support their excellent palm and cycad collections.

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Another \$2500+ went towards encouraging cultivation of rare palm species in residential landscapes right here in Hawaii by organizing tours of three private gardens and public outreach events at the zoo and orchid show. Specifically, the money went to rent a shuttle van for the Floribunda tour in May, buy new mobile sound systems, liability insurance, refreshments, and giveaway plants. These expenditures probably touch members most directly.

We are only able to organize all these events because of the great financial support we get from our members and commercial growers who provide plants for the auction. We netted about \$6800 from our rare palm auction in March (a record) and another \$2600 in membership dues. We will provide a more detailed accounting at our next business meeting. Our financial books are always open to any member.

Rick Kelley

An Evening With Dr. William Baker, Royal Botanical Garden, Kew, UK Friday, February 3, 2023



HIPS is happy to welcome back [Dr. William Baker](#) to our free public lecture series, February 3, 2023. Bill gave a talk on Palms of New Guinea in 2017, his book on the subject will be out in September 2023. Bill works on the Royal Botanical Garden's Tree of Life project which aims to create a genomic map of all plants and fungi. Bill splits his time between herbarium, genetics lab, and the field in order to fill the gaps in the data relating to palms. Bill will talk to us about his latest discoveries from his 2018 trip to Borneo.

Bill will be coming to Hawaii Island from Maui where he will have completed a residency at the Merwin house and garden, hosted by [The Merwin Conservancy](#). This multidisciplinary residency nurtures the work of writers, artists, and scientists who envision and enact new possibilities for our world. Bill follows the residency of the current U.S. Poet Laureate, [Ada Limón](#), and will be followed by Geobotanist and best-selling author of *Lab Girl*, [Hope Jahren](#). Bill will give a presentation at the end of January on Maui as part of The Merwin Conservancy's Green Room series. He will talk about The Tree of Life project and how the data is being used to address questions in global biogeography, biome evolution, and speciation, and how it can be used to further global conservation efforts.

Formal announcements confirming details about Bill's talk on Maui at the end of January, and his talk to HIPS on February 3rd, 2023 will be sent via email.

Annual Meeting and Palm Auction

Save the Date: Friday, February 10, 2023 (Tentative)

We are waiting to hear from the county if Auntie Sally's Luau Hale will open in time to accommodate our annual meeting and much awaited palm auctions. In the meantime, we are working on alternatives for dates and/or locations and will send an email when we know more in January. Thank you for your patience.

Slate of 2023 Officers Pending Membership Approval

Rick Kelley is stepping down as HIPS president, having served his four year term limit. He will still be on the board, but after these last four years, he deserves a break. His thoughtful and nimble leadership navigated us through a heartbreaking volcanic eruption destroying homes, gardens, and natural areas, and a global pandemic that for more than two years now, continues to thwart any attempt at making plans. Thanks to Rick's creative leadership and tireless commitment, we were able to enjoy garden tours, auctions, lectures, and even host the International Palm Society despite all the unpredictability. Mahalo, Rick!

The board is happy to present the following slate of officer candidates for 2023. Thanks to Chris Friesen and Karl Mendonca who were the nominating committee charged with finding the new president.

President ** New **

Jesse R. Miles



Miles and his wife Allison returned to Hawaii in 2020 after several years of living in San Diego County. Miles has been involved with landscaping, conservation, and horticulture since he first moved to the islands in the late 1990s. Currently, he is restoring a palm garden in lower-Puna that was started over 35 years ago and spending his free time hybridizing hibiscus.

Returning officers:



Sara Wagner,
Vice President



Chris Friesen,
Treasurer



Gunnar Hillert,
Secretary

2023 T-Shirt Design Winners

We are very lucky to have had several entries this year. A big mahalo to Jonathon Monto, Steve D'Assis and Mariano Delgado, Bill Atkins, and Kai Chandler and Jerry Andersen for submitting designs. We had a record voter turnout, and we have a tie! Instead of having a run off, we will be offering both shirts so you don't have to choose!

Congratulations to veteran design winner Bill Atkins, and the granddaughter/grandfather duo Kai Chandler and Jerry Andersen for submitting winning designs. Each winning entry will receive a free meal at the annual meeting and palm auction, plus a free t-shirt.



Design by Bill Atkin



Design by Kai Chandler and Jerry Andersen

You will be able to pre-order shirts with customize options with pick-up at the Annual Meeting and Palm Auction or other HIPS events, or drop by to collect them at a location to be announced. A limited number of sizes and colors will be available for purchase at HIPS events throughout the year while supplies last. A Pre-order email will go out in January.

Free Cycad Seeds From Montgomery Botanical Center

Member Ken Beilstein has once again received a shipment of cycad seeds from the [Montgomery Botanical Center](#) seedbank program and is making them available to HIPS members. There will be 3 packages of 4 seeds each of *Cycas siamensis* with a viability of about 57%, and 10 packages of 5 seeds each of *Cycas diannanensis* with a viability of about 80% for distribution as well as copies of the accession data and the phytosanitary certificate. If you are interested, contact Rick Kelley at Rickkelley@att.net



Cycas siamensis

Cycas siamensis is a small cycad with a trunk of 1.5 meters tall and a leaf canopy of 2 meters in diameter at maturity. In mature plants the trunk base will be abruptly and distinctly swollen. As the name suggests, the species is native to central Thailand as well as neighboring areas of Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam.

[Photos from National Parks Flora and Fauna Web](#)

Several important horticultural notes:

1. Cycas siamensis is considered a somewhat difficult species in cultivation. It is deciduous and has a distinct dormant stage associated with dry conditions. Both young and mature plants (and both 'in habitat' and in cultivation) will lose their leaves during the dormant period. Do not over-water during this inactive period. Good drainage is a critical requirement.
2. Both young and mature plants do not respond well to being moved or transplanted. After the seedling stage, transplanting is discouraged.
3. The cones of male plants often have an unpleasant odor as the cones mature and then disintegrate. The odor attracts pollinators, but Cycas siamensis should not be planted close to a dwelling or residence.
4. The color of the leaves can appear quite variable and is a very attractive characteristic of the species. The leaflets are covered in fine hairs that give the leaves distinct color variations – white, yellow, brown to orange.

Seed germination is reliable and reasonably straightforward. And plants will grow at a moderately rapid rate – as long as they are not disturbed once permanently sited.

Cycas siamensis has been assessed by the IUCN as a “Vulnerable” species with an ‘in habitat’ population under 10,000 and rapidly decreasing. IUCN Red List: #42066.

Montgomery Botanical Center. Accession # 20220294.



Cycas Diannanensis

Cycas diannanensis is a medium sized cycad with a trunk at maturity of about 3 meters and a leaf canopy of 3-5 meters. The species is native to mountainous areas of southwestern China in Yunnan Province. The species was first discovered and classified in 1995. Alternate names for this species have been “Red River Sago Palm”, the “Manhao Cycad” and initially “Cycas pectinata ssp. Manhaoensis”. All are synonyms for C. diannanensis.

Male cone. Photo from Cycads of the World by David L. Jones

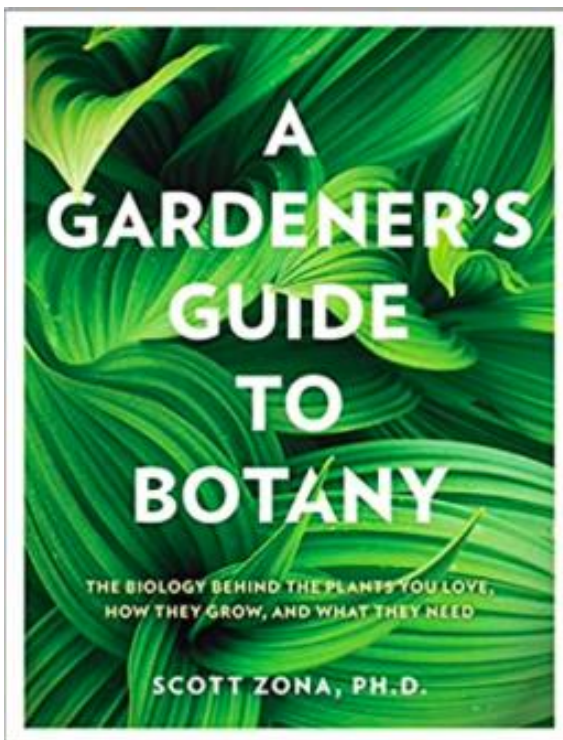
Horticultural notes:

1. Native habitat for the species is between 700 and 1200 meters. Thus – it is surprisingly cold tolerant and will survive a light frost.
2. It grows in shady and sheltered conditions under a broad leaf canopy. Dappled sunlight or light shade are recommended. Do not grow in full sun.
3. Local soil conditions in the montane regions of Yunnan have developed from limestone formations so small amounts of garden lime in the soil mix will be beneficial. Good drainage is a requirement.

The conservation status of *Cycas diannanensis* is not encouraging. IUCN has assessed the species as “Vulnerable”. IUCN Red List # 42052. In habitat population is under 5000 and decreasing rapidly. The most recent IUCN assessment was completed 15 years ago. Today – the conservation status is more likely “Endangered” or perhaps “Critically Endangered”. The species is a particular focus of conservation efforts at the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden in Yunnan – one of China’s paramount conservation research institutions.

Montgomery Botanical Center. Accession # 20220287.

New Book From Scott Zona



You may recognize the author of this new book. Scott Zona gave a talk to HIPS several years back, and you may have met him when he came on the Hawaii Biennial last October. Scott is co-editor of the International Palm Society’s journal *Palms*.

His new book is [available now](#) on Amazon:

Ever wonder if plants sleep or why their leaves are shaped a certain way? The inner workings of the plants you love are revealed and celebrated in this guide by botany expert Dr. Scott Zona.

A Gardener’s Guide to Botany is not just another book on how to grow plants. Instead, it’s a lushly illustrated botanical journey into what makes plants tick, delivered in layman’s terms that are easily understood and appreciated by both advanced gardeners and first-timers. It’s the chlorophyll-infused science behind the plants you know and love, whether you grow them indoors or out.

Here are a few editorial reviews:

*“I taught introductory botany for 43 years. Had *A Gardener’s Guide to Botany* been available as a textbook, I would have used it every year. Dr. Scott Zona has done a superb job explaining plant biology in a delightful and accurate way. I recommend it without hesitation.”*—Prof. Karl J. Niklas, Cornell University

"This is the book I have been waiting for! Dr Zona explains the hows and whys of plant science in a way that everyone can understand, demystifying terms such as polyploidy and angiosperm. This is a must-read for all gardeners who want to extend their understanding of the plants they grow."—Jane Perrone, creator and host of the On the Ledge podcast

"Gardening is a wonderful hobby that is made all the better by a deeper understanding of the plants we grow. Within these pages, Dr. Scott Zona introduces readers to the inner workings of our botanical companions in a way that is fascinating, easy to understand, and often beautifully illustrated. For those looking to take their gardening hobby to the next level, this book is for you!"—Dr. Matt Candeias, author and host of the "In Defense of Plants" podcast

Tree Fall in the Hawaii Tropical Bioreserve and Gardens By Rick Kelley

Whack!

A few days before Thanksgiving [Hawaii Tropical Bioreserve and Gardens](#) suffered a major loss when a massive banyan tree fell over during a calm night. Luckily, because it happened at night, no visitors or employees were injured. Unfortunately, a prized *Corypha umbraculifera* that was just beginning to trunk took a direct hit having all its fronds sheared off. The individual fronds were over ten feet in tall.



The *Corypha* in April 2021, surrounded by lush foliage and beginning to stretch for light.



The *Corypha* with robust leaves extending from a recently emerging trunk.

It took days for a crew with chainsaws to remove the fallen banyan from around the palm. Close inspection showed that although all the fronds had been lost, the growing point appeared to be ok.



December 2022 after crews removed the giant Ficus tree.

The hope is that this tree will soon push up a new frond and begin a recovery. Assuming it does pull through, it will be in a much better setting for future growth. With the banyan gone, a large area of the forest has opened up with much more sunlight.

Note from the editor:

This newsletter goes out quarterly (more or less), the next newsletter will go out March 31st. If you have any questions, comments, or would like to contribute to the production of the newsletter, contact Mary Lock at marylock@sbcglobal.net.