

# Pritchardia

March 2020 Newsletter

Issue #26



**HAWAII ISLAND PALM SOCIETY**

**WWW.HAWAIIISLANDPALMSOCIETY.COM**

## President's Message



The entire world seems to have turned upside down in the past few weeks. It is impossible to predict what restrictions on gatherings will be in place this summer. The HIPS board met in late February to put together the schedule of garden tours that includes two of the most beautiful and interesting established gardens on the island along with a newly planted property. Plus, we planned to repeat the very popular potluck lunch and member plant sale at the Ferazzi's home. Whether or not we get to host these events depends on developments outside our control. It may be an advantage that our

tentative schedule of tours begin in July and run through October, we sincerely hope we will be able to enjoy each other's company later in the summer.

All the more reason to be thankful that we were able to enjoy our annual barbecue and rare palm auction in February. The board worked hard behind the scenes to make things run smoothly. We hope everyone had a great time and took home wonderful plants. Obviously, this would be impossible without the very generous growers who supply the great plants. A big mahalo goes out to Jeff Marcus, Jerry Anderson, Bob Davis, Bill Austin, Mike Merritt, Tony Armstrong, Tim Brian, and Don Hemmes for bringing an amazing collection of species this year as they have many prior years. Many thanks also to our outgoing treasurer, Stephen Kling, and our incoming treasurer, Chris Friesen, for organizing the auctions and smooth checkout process. This is a huge organizational job. Stephen served as treasurer for several years and provided incredible service to HIPS.

The next few months will be difficult for everyone. Please reach out (figuratively) to neighbors and friends to see if they need any help. We made it through the 2018 lava eruption. I'm sure we will come out the other side of this crisis as well. We are luckier than most communities because social distancing does not affect our favorite activity, working in the garden. I expect everyone to have a perfectly weed-free garden soon because of all the extra free time you suddenly have. Stay safe.

Rick Kelley

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## Summer/Fall Garden Tours

It is difficult to predict whether we are able to safely offer any of the garden tours this year given circumstances related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Please save these dates and we will remain hopeful. For more information, go to our website's [Events](#) page.

### Saturday July 25<sup>th</sup>: Rick Kelley's Orchidland Garden

Members putting in new gardens often wonder how long will it take to build a garden from scratch. This garden is an excellent example of what kind of growth is possible given one man's boundless energy and loads of cinder and mulch! Aside from palms, Rick loves orchids. He is single handedly putting the orchid back in Orchidland, tying orchids to palms and pretty much anything else vertical. Rick bought the three acre "spaghetti lot" measuring 125 ft along the road and 1000 ft deep in 2012. Pahoehoe lava formations produce a somewhat hilly topography. In 2015 a dozer extended the driveway 700 ft down the middle of the lot so the entire area was accessible to cinder trucks. So far 55 dump truck loads of cinder have been used to fill in low spots and create raised beds on slopes. An equal amount of mulch has been mixed in to provide some organic material for moisture retention. So far he has planted over 100 species of palms.



Left to right: *Marojejya darianii*, *Anthurium cupulispatum*, *Licuala peltata* var *sumawongii* planted in 2016



May 2017



March 2020

Check out more then and now photos [here](#).

### Saturday August 15<sup>th</sup>: Potluck and Palm Sale at the Ferrazi's Farm in Pepeekeo

Back by popular demand, Bob and Patty are hosting HIPS at their farm in Pepeekeo. Bring your appetite for potluck and palms. HIPS will provide a main entree and water, please bring



a salad, side dish, or dessert to share. All members are encouraged to bring potted palms, cycads, and other tropical plants to trade or sell to fellow members. Please test and treat plant material for fire ant before bringing plants to the farm. We will have tents, tables, and chairs for the potluck, but members should bring their own canopies and tables for their sales items. Questions about selling palms at the event? Contact Rick Kelley, [rickkelley@att.net](mailto:rickkelley@att.net)

### Saturday September 12<sup>th</sup> (tentative date): Master Class at [Floribunda Palms](#)

This is a rare chance to geek out with local legend Jeff Marcus as he guides us through his extensive palm collection to demonstrate interesting palm morphology and taxonomic mysteries. The Marcus garden is a wonderful example of how private gardens can play a role in taxonomic research. Several new species of palm have been named from his garden, and herbarium vouchers made from palms in his garden have been sent to world renown botanical gardens including The Royal Botanical Garden at Kew in the United Kingdom. We are working on ways to accommodate as many members who would like to attend, while insuring people can hear and see specimens up close. We will email members with more information and when online registration opens.



## Saturday October 3<sup>rd</sup>: Casa de las Palmas in Hilo

Lars Woodruff and Irene Francis are tireless stewards of one of East Hawaii's most beautiful legacy gardens. Originally created by the late Jerry Hunter, an extraordinary nurseryman who established Palms of Paradise nursery here on Hawaii as a growing grounds for his California nursery Rancho Soledad in San Diego County. This is one of the loveliest large gardens on Hawaii. The garden appears in the book *Designing With Palms* by Jason Dewees. Irene and Lars have not only restored the garden to its former glory but have started to make their own improvements bringing their own artistic talent to the land.



### Upcoming Events:

- *Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup>: Pritchardias of Kauai by Mike Demotta, Curator of Living Collections at The National Tropical Botanic Garden – **Postponed - TBD***
- *Saturday, May 9: Membership outreach booth at Zoo Plant Sale - **Cancelled***
- *Wednesday, May 13: **Virtual** board meeting t-shirts contest results, Orchid Show participation update, first garden tour planning. Members welcome, contact Rick Kelley at rickkelley@att.net.*
- *Thursday, June 25-Sunday, June 27: Community Outreach Display at the Hilo Orchid Show. Volunteers and materials needed. Contact Sara Wagner at [sara.anslow@gmail.com](mailto:sara.anslow@gmail.com) (**TBD – pending Orchid Society decision**)*

*For complete calendar of events, go to the [Events](#) page on our website:*

## Destruction and Creation at the Pana'ewa Zoo and Rainforest Gardens: Update from HIPS Zoo Crew

HIPS began planting the palm collection at the zoo shortly after it opened 40+ years ago. Over the years we have helped maintain the collection with regular fertilizing, removing overgrowth of surrounding weed trees, and providing signage to educate visitors about the collection. Many of those first palms are now huge. Sadly, the zoo will soon undergo a major renovation to bring the walking paths in compliance with stricter ADA requirements. This construction will require periodic closures of the zoo and removal of many palms anywhere near the entrance or paved paths inside. The HIPS zoo committee toured the grounds with zoo director, Pam Mizuno, to see which palms would be affected. It's bad. Director Mizuno will work with the contractor to see if several of the rarest species could be saved by modifying the construction design. We considered whether attempting to move very tall palms would be worth the effort and expense. In the end we were forced to the conclusion that resources would be better spent on new plantings once the work was

complete. The zoo has already received donations of many rare potted palms, and more will be acquired once we can evaluate which species would thrive in the new sites. We regret the loss of so many mature palms, but look forward to the renewal that comes with young palms.

Not all the news from the zoo is about destruction, there is now a new cycad garden. Last June Pat McGrath approached Rick Kelley from the HIPS Zoo Crew about donating cycads to the zoo in memory of his wife, Kristen. This put into motion a series of activities that resulted in an Eagle Scout project and a new cycad garden. On January 4<sup>th</sup>, after only two hours the team of scouts and parents had everything in the ground. But as every gardener knows, this was just the beginning, the HIPS Zoo Crew has committed to maintaining both the original and new cycad gardens in addition to the palm collection. Interested in volunteering? Contact Rick Kelley at [rickkelley@att.net](mailto:rickkelley@att.net).



Courtesy photo

About 20 members of Boy Scout Troop 95 came out on Jan. 4 to build a new cycad garden at the entrance to the Panaewa Rainforest Zoo and Garden.

## Panaewa Zoo gets new cycad garden courtesy of Boy Scouts

Visitors to the Panaewa Rainforest Zoo and Garden will now be welcomed by a new cycad garden courtesy of Adam Sako and his fellow scouts from Troop 95. Zoo Director Pam Mizuno explained that local nurseryman Patrick McGrath recently donated a group of very large, rare cycads from his personal collection in memory of his late wife, Kristen. Since the existing cycad garden near the zoo entrance was already full, a new site was needed for the donated plants.



SAKO

"When the scoutmaster from Troop 95 asked me if we had any jobs for an Eagle Scout project, I immediately thought of the cycad garden," said Mizuno. Sako had to learn about the history of this ancient group of cone-bearing plants that were abundant at the time of the dinosaurs and their special cultural requirements. The donated *Encephalartos* species originate from drier

parts of Southern Africa. To prevent their roots from rotting in rainy Hilo, the cycads had to be planted in raised beds of volcanic black cinder to allow perfect drainage. "Most cycads are critically endangered in their native habitats, so it was exciting to help preserve these unusual plants for the public to enjoy," said Sako. "Organizing the project took a year and the help of everyone in Troop 95, but the finished garden is beautiful and will be here forever."

## 2020 Auctions Fun Facts

Enthusiastic bidders and generous growers helped raise a total of \$3906.00. 30 people went home with plants from the silent auction, which had 79 palms and cycads and raised \$2111.00. Rick Kelley, our lively auctioneer this year, auctioned off 22 palms to 17 buyers for \$1795.00. Thanks to our outgoing treasurer Stephen Kling for compiling these facts, and here are some more:

**Highest Price of Either Auction:**  
**\$200.00 for 1 gallon *Lanonia magalonii* live auction**  
 Donated by Jeff Marcus



Photo: Stephen Villers/Palmpedia

### Lanonia 11 magalonii

Vietnam

Understory to 4', solitary or clustered with middle segment wider than the rest. This 'rare' dainty little gem is perfect for small gardens and those with canopy. Shade, plenty of moisture.

## Highest Price in the Silent Auction:

\$165.00 for a HUGE 7 gallon

*Cyrtostachys renda*

Donated by Bob Davis



## Biggest Silent Auction Battles:

\$70.00 with 10 bids for a 1 gallon cycad *Zamia pygmaea* donated by Don Hemmes.

The victors: Suchin and Jeff Marcus

\$48.00 with 10 bids for a 6" *Pelagodoxa henryana* donated by Rick Kelley.

The victors: Gunnar and Alysia Hillert

\$45.00 with 10 bids for 2 gallon *Livistona fulva* donated by Mike Merritt.

The victors: Ronald and Linette Quaid

\$25.00 with 10 bids for 1 gallon *Livistona rigida* donated by Mike Merritt

The victor: Gary Jaster

\$27.00 with 10 bids for 2 gallon *Ptychosperma burretianum* donated by Mike Merritt

The victor: Joshua Black

## Thank you growers:

Jeff Marcus, Jerry Anderson, Bob Davis, Bill Austin, Mike Merritt, Tony Armstrong, Tim Brian, Don Hemmes, and Rick Kelley.

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## New Affiliation with Montgomery Botanical Center Seed Bank

Member Ken Beilstein suggested to the HIPS board last month that the [Montgomery Botanical Center Seed Bank](#), dedicated to conservation through cultivation, would be a great match for our society. After unanimous approval from the board, Ken contacted the seed bank coordinator Jessica Sparks to see if we could join their palm and cycad seed distribution program. The center is located just south of Miami, Florida. Although Montgomery was happy to include HIPS as an affiliate, they cannot ship palm seeds to Hawaii due to lethal yellowing disease prevalent in Florida. However, cycads are a different story and Jessica has already obtained appropriate certification and has shipped possibly 20-30 *Cycas edentata* seeds. We are still working out the logistics for this project, we don't know how many seeds or species will be sent, or how many of our members have the patience and interest in germinating cycads. Many *Cycas* seeds have an after-ripening period of 6-12 months before the embryo is completely developed, and germination usually takes 12-18 months. Some seeds of the *Cycas rumphii* complex, of which *Cycas edentata* belongs, have been known to take several years to germinate. If you are interested in participating in a pilot for this program, please register here and we will contact you

with more information. Thanks to Ken for making the connection with Montgomery Botanical Center Seed Bank and its wonderful mission.



*Cycas edentata* is a medium-sized cycad endemic primarily to islands in the Philippines. An IUCN assessed Near Threatened (NT) species, the population was estimated in 2009 to be about 10,000 mature plants. However, the population is decreasing as coastal areas of Southeast Asia are developed for tourism, and especially for aquaculture.

## Cryosophila nana – Who knew you can root palm stem cuttings?

If there was one fact that I thought I could be sure of, it was that if you cut off the growing tip of a palm (the apical meristem), you will kill it. But in the scrub land on the Pacific coast of Mexico cleared for Agave farms, *Cryosophila nana* is able to grow from cuttings left in heaps on the ground. It is possible because of an amazing transformation that happens with the spines on their trunks. The spines on the trunk start off as roots, they get hard, they shed their blunt cap, and elongate into sharp protective points. When the cut stems are left on the ground, those spines turn down and start growing roots from the once sharp tip. The root buries itself into the soil and the palm regenerates.

*Cryosophila nana* is actually being grown from cuttings at the Botanical Gardens of Vallarta. It can also grow back from remnant stumps and can even generate multiple heads from the stump. This resilience still might not be enough to save the species. *Cryosophila nana* is on the list of near threatened species by the IUCN. It is only found in the Pacific coast of Mexico in places like the dry coastal shrub around Puerto Vallarta and pine and oak forests up to 5600 ft elevation. Some of its habitat is being protected, still large amounts of the forests have been cleared for Agave farms to make tequila.



*A pretty dwarf fan palm that rarely grows over 16 feet. It can grow in sun or shade and in coastal areas. Its juicy sweet pulp is used locally for palm wine. Photos from Rarepalmseeds.com and Palmpedia.com.*

I found this info in an article in a 2006 issue of Palms, written by Felix Montes from Puerto Vallarta. You can read the full article [here](#) on the Vallarta Botanical Gardens website.

## Member Dean Ouer creates an outlet for socially distanced palm enthusiasts

Thanks to HIPS member and creator of the online forum [Palm Talk](#) Dean Ouer, we can share our gardens, ask questions, and exchange ideas with other palm growers, despite the mandate to stay at home. Why wait for our 2020 garden tours? You can enjoy garden tours from around the world, or right here on Hawaii. Palm Talk and Palmpedia (an online encyclopedia for palms) were created by Dean over 15 years ago and he still manages them today from his home and garden in Kaloko Mauka overlooking Kona. HIPS is thankful to Dean for the many hours he has devoted to creating a dedicated [HIPS multimedia](#) page housing online versions of our lecture series on his website [Tropiscape](#). His passion for connecting palm enthusiasts and disseminating knowledge means that while we embrace physical distancing, we don't have to lose our social community.

Like many of us, Dean had the early signs of a gardener. Dean remembers how as a child he was enthralled by the process of plucking seeds from marigold flowers and watching them sprout. When Dean's parents took him to Hawaii soon after it gained statehood, he became fascinated by tropical landscapes. His introduction to the International Palm Society came by chance when chatting up a waitress about his palm garden (ever the charmer), she told him that her husband also was into palms and maybe he would let Dean see his garden. It took a long time for that waitress to convince her husband Phil Morgan, a celebrated and early member of the International Palm Society to invite Dean over. After seeing his garden and the IPS palm journal, Dean bought all the back issues of the journal and turned from growing palms as canopy for shade loving tropicals to growing them in their own right. Dean has been a member of the International Palm Society now for more than 30 years and moved to Hawaii over 10 years ago. He has created a



*Dean driving the cart with Grace and Art during a HIPS tour of his garden.*

spectacular garden with his fiancé Angela, who by the way, he met on Palm Talk. It just goes to show you that you never know what you might find on an online forum devoted to palms.

## *T-shirt Design Contest*

### *Win 2 Dinners at the Annual Meeting + 2 Free T-shirts*

#### **Rules:**

Designs to be front, back, or front and back  
No photos, designs must be graphical  
Designs can use up to 3 colors, remember that the t-shirt color can be used as part of the design  
Designs should include "Hawaii Island Palm Society" with no date  
Submit a scanned photo or PDF of your design to [HawaiiIslandPalmSociety@gmail.com](mailto:HawaiiIslandPalmSociety@gmail.com)

#### **Deadline:**

Entries should be submitted no later than Friday, May 6<sup>st</sup>  
Membership will vote via an online poll sent out on May 14<sup>th</sup>, polling closes on May 22<sup>nd</sup>

#### **Prize:**

2 Free Dinners at the Annual Meeting February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and 2 Free T-shirts

#### **Note from the editor:**

This newsletter goes out quarterly, the next newsletter will go out June 30<sup>th</sup>. If you have any questions, comments, or would like to contribute to the production of the newsletter, contact Mary Lock at [marylock@sbcglobal.net](mailto:marylock@sbcglobal.net).