



## President's Message



### Plans in Flames

Which is bad, but not nearly as bad as planes in flames. Back in early June, the HIPS board met to lay out a busy post-pandemic schedule of garden tours, plant sales, lectures, and public outreach events. I thought it would be best to hold off on these until the end of summer to give everyone a chance to get vaccinated and for the Covid19 case numbers to fall to near zero. Didn't want to take any chances with our members' health. Our first garden tour was set for Saturday, August 28. On Friday August 27 the mayor issued an emergency order limiting outdoor gatherings to no more than ten people. There went the fall schedule. Damn you Delta Variant!!!!

As I write, the peak of the Delta surge seems to be behind us. Case numbers and hospitalizations are gradually falling. If the county relaxes the limits on outdoor gatherings, we will do our best to reschedule as many garden tours as we can. We want to send out a big mahalo to our garden hosts who have been so understanding about the ups and downs of organizing events with so much uncertainty. If we are able to offer a tour, it may be on short notice. Invitations will go out by email, so please open any messages you get from HIPS. For everyone's safety in the age of Delta, all attendees will need to be fully vaccinated, masked, and maintain social distancing. Unfortunately, the next few months are typically very wet. Have your umbrella ready. Maybe rain washes viral droplets out of the air...

It is hard to forecast what conditions will be like in February, but at this point it seems unlikely we would be able to hold our regular indoor palm auction and banquet at Auntie Sally's. We are considering alternatives such as holding the event during daylight hours outdoors at a covered venue. Outdoor gathering limits would need to be raised to at least 100 for this to happen. Just in case we are able to make the logistics work, please look around your shade house to see if you have any interesting surplus baby palms that need a new home. We may be looking for donations in January if conditions improve.

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As frustrating as these cancellations have been, we are comparatively fortunate in Hawaii where we can spend our days working in our gardens that nourish the soul. Everyone else has it so much worse. Stay safe. Get out there and pull those weeds. Hope to see everyone soon.

Rick Kelley

## 2021 Garden Tours and Events Postponed Until Further Notice

Due to continued restrictions, all 2021 Events have been postponed until further notice. We will send out a notice via email if we are able to squeeze in a garden tour or other in person event before the close of the year. We appreciate your understanding and continued support, and very much look forward to meeting in person whenever that may be.

## Aloha From the Maui Garden of Jerry and Robin Welch



You never know what will spark the fire of inspiration, for Jerry Welch, a chance encounter with a stranger on the street of uncertain character during a random trip to Florida led him to a lifetime passion for palms, culminating in a glorious two acre collector's garden on Maui. Ignoring the advice of friends, Jerry took up the offer from a stranger who promised to show him some of the best properties in Key West if Jerry would get him some breakfast. A trip to Denny's and Jerry was down the rabbit hole. The man took Jerry into the back gates of big houses with huge palm collections. He was astounded at the palms and took lots of pictures.

*"The next day when I wanted to find out what some of them were, especially the Coryphas, I took pictures to the local library and they had one book in the back, in the reference section, Palms Around The World. The librarian stood behind me while I read the book. They were afraid I would tear the pages out. They had bad luck with their palm books."*

Shortly after he came back, a famous palm researcher gave a slide lecture at a Maui public library. He met a number of people interested in palms there and some Big Island palm people even flew over. For a short time Sunya Erlichman organized a small Maui palm society in the early 90's, with a few members including – Jim Dobson, Bill Bleitz, John Stone from the Maui Tropical Botanic Garden in Iao Valley, and the poet William Merwin. There weren't a lot of palm gardens to see on Maui, and they all would fly over to the Big Island for HIPS tours and to shop for palms.

***“The guy that had Kaphoho Palms came to pick us up in a convertible. We came back with all kinds of palms, we came on the plane with some big palms that they let us just stick in the seats because the plane wasn't full. It was a different time.”***

Jerry built his house on Maui and moved here after selling his dental practice on the mainland. His land was a clean slate and he started thinking about landscaping with his friend Jim Dobson who had some landscape design experience. They formed a conceptual sketch of shapes, sizes, and types of plants but not a formal plan. Jerry knew he wanted to line his driveway with royal palms and was set on finding a specimen earpod tree to anchor the landscape.



*An early aerial photo shows the driveway lined with *Roystonea oleracea* with its straight trunk, already setting himself off from the typical planting of the swollen trunked *R. regia*. You can see the hat raked earpod tree, *Enterolobium cyclocarpum*, to the right of the house. Now it nearly spans the entire area between the house and driveway.*



Most of the 2 acre property was still field grass when his wife Robin moved in with him 24 years ago. It was Robin who pushed the garden out by hiring a guy to mow paths through the field grass. They took a shopping trip to Peter Palm on the Big Island (no longer in business) and Robin bought Jerry a container of mostly 5-7 gallon palms and a few 10-15 gallon palms, thinking they wanted to see them grow tall in their lifetime. They planted around the house and in the upper part of the property, but it wasn't long before Robin stopped a guy driving up the road with a machine and hired him on the spot to knock down the rest of the grass on the lower half of the property. Jerry said that there was barbed wire and boulders hidden in the field grass and they pushed the whole mess over the berm at the edge of the property, though he said he cleaned it up later. Another order of palms from the Big Island and many flats of ground cover and the lower area became garden.



*View looking toward the road from the upstairs lanai. Dense plantings give way to open green lawns to better appreciate the massive plantings.*





Looking at a giant *Raphia australis* palm from the lawn at the bottom of the property. At left, a cluster of the everglades palm, *Acoelorrhaphe wrightii*.



*Corypha umbraculifera*, the palm that started it all.



Graceful *Mauritiella aculeata*

His new palm friends Jim, Bill, and John all had nurseries growing exotic palms, but few on Maui were interested in palms other than the few common varieties that their neighbors were growing. Even today Maui has a very limited selection of palms available and only a handful of surviving nurseries. Jerry set up his own 20 X 20 shade house behind his house and started trading plants and seeds. In the early days, regulations requiring ag inspections were just being talked about. He remembers getting his *Voanioala gerardii* shipped to him in coffee cans from California.





*This is what a *Lemurophoenix halleuxii* looks like with a trunk!  
We were lucky to see this just after a leaf dropped and exposed  
the brilliant pink crownshaft.*

Under the auspices of delivering the HIPS t-shirt Jerry ordered, Michael and I got to walk through the enormous palms planted three decades ago. I don't think Jerry ever forgot his love for giants like the *Coryphas* he first saw in Florida, we saw some of the largest specimens of rare palms we've ever seen.



*Dypsis sp. Bejoug viewed from the second story lanai.*



When we looked up close, there were plenty of astonishing flower parts and trunks that make palms so darn fascinating.



*Deckenia nobilis* with its whorl of hairy kiwi like spathes.



The inflorescence of *Wallichia densiflora* just peeking out of bracts.



The wonderful fruit and burlap like trunk of *Zombia antillarum*



*Dypsis perrieri*. This thickly furry spathe hasn't opened after almost 18 months.



*Unmistakable Licuala sp. Mapu*

It was wonderful to visit with Jerry and Robin, their cute cat following us from a distance as we walked the garden. It was an afternoon filled with aloha and their generosity.

#### Note from the editor:

This newsletter goes out quarterly (more or less), the next newsletter will go out December 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](mailto:marylock@sbcglobal.net).