

A.S.G.A.P. CYCAD, ZAMIAD AND PALM STUDY GROUP
NEWSLETTER NO. 63 - FEBRUARY - MARCH, 1995

Leader: Len P. Butt - Ph. No. 07 8483515

Asst: Brian Runnegar - Ph. No. 07 2861164

Subscriptions for 1995 due 1st, June.

The past year has been one full of the unexpected, expected, and a few surprises. Not for a long time has so many botanists and taxonomy enthusiasts been so busy in our field of work. This is all for the good, now we have Ken Hill, David Jones, Sharon Chirgwin and Paul Forster working and updating everything from Cycas to section Parazamia, while younger groups are coming to the fore. I do notice Peter Machin has had his name on one of the newer section Parazamias.

I am slowing down physically in field work, wish it was not so, but it is, so this is also a plea to help this study group with your own observations and notes if you are out in the field or just visiting a cycadale or palm garden. Remembering one of my critics said I never did get further than my Brisbane desk (my comment, Boy, how very wrong he was):

Now we have quite a few collectors here in S.E. Qld., all with fine collections of mostly exotic cycadales, but to my knowledge I do not see many who have specialised in our indigenous species, only, and I venture to guess this is because the dollar value of them is not what can be got from most exotics.

Browsing through the official papers of the botanists to date I see they rightly comment on the poaching from the wild aspect as being the biggest hazard facing their conservation. A worthy comment, but definitely not the only hazard or even the worst one.

In North W.A. the N.T. and far Northern Qld. the obvious worst hazard which did start as a ceremonial method as part of the hunting methods of our indigenous people, and I do mean firing the scrub. Blend this with farmer poisonings and grazier attitudes to them and you have the real hazard. In a country where sheep and cattle are vastly overstocked, ~~everything that harms the stock, has to go~~, and methods other than destruction, I find are not listened to.

Poaching as bad as it sometimes is, is often a preferable alternative. Over the spring period, I have been testing out a few acquired products on my own plants and have had good results. The auxin, trace element product "sea-sol", I find excellent on producing fronds on difficult caudices or on germinating seed by pre-soaking in it.

Two newly described palms of our North Queensland are mentioned here data from "Austrobaileya" Vol. 4 number 2. The first an *Archontophoenix* x palm to 20 metres with a trunk to 26 cm., with prominent leaf scars and a base of 60 cm. Leaves 3.15 metres long. Named for Robert Tucker (1955 - 1992) who first published notes on its differences to *Alexandrae* (Tucker 1988) *Archontophoenix tuckeri*.

Particularly abundant along Peach River inland side of McIlwraith Range and Rocky River on coastal side of same range. Approximately 12 large leaves on a crown, lime-green crownshaft to 130 cm. long. Flowering occurs June to February - mature seed August to November.

2 - *Archontophoenix purpurea*, that outstanding purple crownshaft species long noted from Mt. Lewis, also from Mt. Spurgern and Mt. Finnegan, north-east tropical Queensland. Palm to 25 metres, trunk to 45 cm., expanding at base. Smooth trunk with slightly raised leaf scars 3 cm. wide - leaves 7 - 15 in crown, 6 metres long slightly twisting. Crown shaft 130 cm. long - sheath is a plum colour. This is caused by three components, dark blue, grey green sheath surface, a powdery glaucous bloom and reddish mahogany coloured fleck like scales from a distance and distinct purplish colouration.

Primarily confined to creeks and gullies with access to running water. Taxonomy Hodel and Dawe 1993. The fruit of this species the largest in genus.

The botanical reading and in most cases naming of new species of *Macrozamia* section *Parazamia* in Queensland by David L. Jones and Paul Forster. The first of Canberra the second from Indooroopilly Herbarium, Qld. Further data, I hope will be available but so far I seek permission from the authors. David L. Jones and Paul Forster (I quote) *Macrozamia* section *Parazamia* comprises small to relatively small plants with a subterranean caudex which may be branched or unbranched by more than one population. Usually spirally twisted, the lower leaflets (pinnae) not reduced and spine like, and an absence of mucilage canals in the leaflets (Johnson 1959).

Two complexes dominate *Parazamia* in Queensland (unquote).

The inland complex below is *M. conferta*, restricted to ranges near Warwick in the Darling Downs district. *M. cranei* restricted to the Texas area of the Darling Downs district.

M. fearnsidei restricted to the Injune area in the Leichhardt district.

M. machinii restricted to the Springsure area in the Darling Downs district.

M. accidia restricted to the Sundown area in the Darling Downs district.

M. platyrachis restricted to the Blackdown tablelands in Leichhardt district.

M. viridis restricted to the Giraween area in the Darling Downs district.