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ASSOCIATED SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS

CYCAD & ZAMIAD STUDY GROUP NO. 32.

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News arrives constantly of new reported findings of blue fronded cycas, and the question arises are they the same or at least related species.

So far I have no study sheet on the Chudleigh Station "Glen Idle" so I cannot compare it correctly with interesting data on the Mt. Surprise plant.

Because of changes in colouration of re-planted species now near the coast, it may well be soil structure and drier inland environment is causing the vivid blue colouration to these cycads. Time, and dedicated study will tell.

* * * * *

Hi friends,

Bob Dinte of Finch Hatton picked the one rainy day for ages to do his data sheet. The information duly arrived with a long roly-poly package of three fronds for further checking.

Bob's identification queries Cycas media, but it probably is that species. The habitat is 9.5 kms. east from the turn to Bruce Highway on the Seaforth Road. They occur on both sides of road on rolling hill country amongst grass-trees and eucalypts.

Height of the caudex 2.7 metres, diameter 640 mm. and unbranched. Lots of seedlings near plants. Number of seed sporophylls from crown, forty. Number of ovules 200 which average 4 to 6 per sporophyll, Length of sporophyll 37.5 cms, original colour of seed, green but yellow when ripe. No male cones, as they were just forming. Frond leaves 42 to 45, length of leaf 1.2 m, length of rachis 1.5 metres. Short spines on rachis below leaves 5 to 7 each side, approx. 3 to 2.5 cms., pairs of leaflets 45 to 50 pairs.

Length at top of frond 25 cm. across pair, middle measurement 77 cm. across pair. Lower measurement 39 cms. across pair, prominent mid rib nerve.

The fronds are glossy green below and yellow green beneath (underside). Some leaf rachis seem to be squarish and others round when viewed at cut end. Several hundred plants in this area, with lots of young ones coming up. Average height of tallest spp. is approx. 3 - 3.5 metres.

Female sporophyll are carrying 4 to 6 ovules from the spear shaped top. Some seeds fully grown while some still small and immature, length of seed 40 mm., breadth of seed 30 mm.

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For which we say, thank-you, Bob Dinte.

CYCAS SP,
LOWER O'BRIENS
CREEK. MT,
SURPRISE GEMFIELD
AREA. 4-7-87,
DATA SHEET COLONY
PHOTOS BY I.S.
CHAMPION



CROWN,

20 Swift St.,
SLADE POINT. 4741.

24th August, 1987

Dear Len,

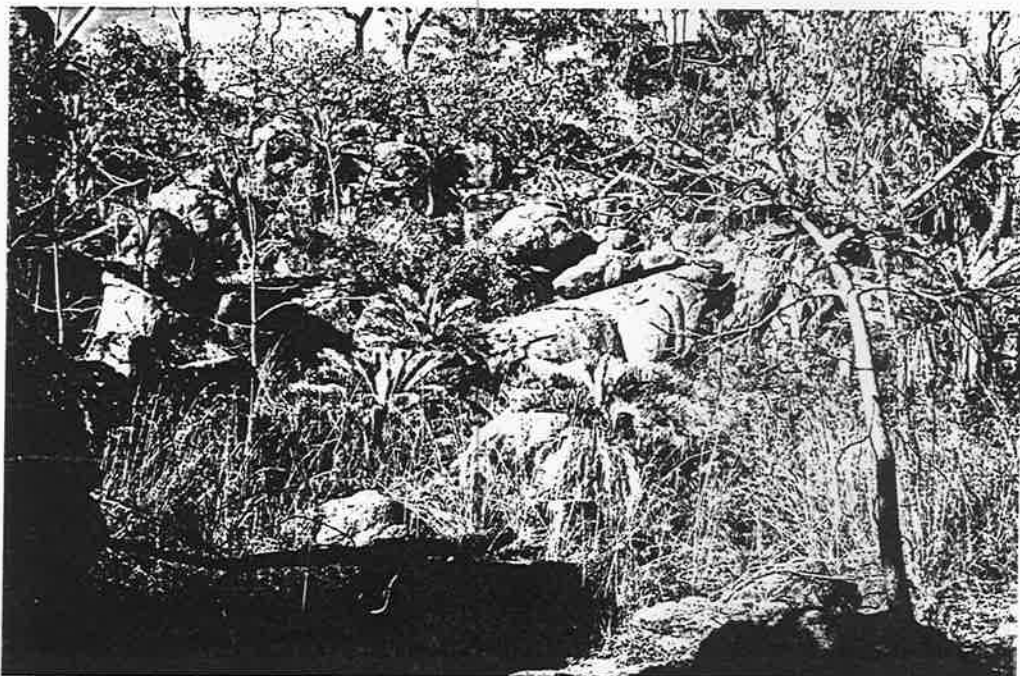
Have just received the latest Cycad & Zamiad Newsletter and it has spurred me on to doing up the parcel of specimens collected in July this year. My first Data Sheet is also enclosed (filled out to the best of my ability - hence the specimens).

I was fortunate to be able to accompany my son back to the Mt. Surprise area again this year so was able to take further slides of the beautiful blue coloured Cycas sp. The new slides which are still being copied include one of a male cone and a crown of new growth as well as more habitat photos. In the meantime, I'm sending you the ones from 1985.

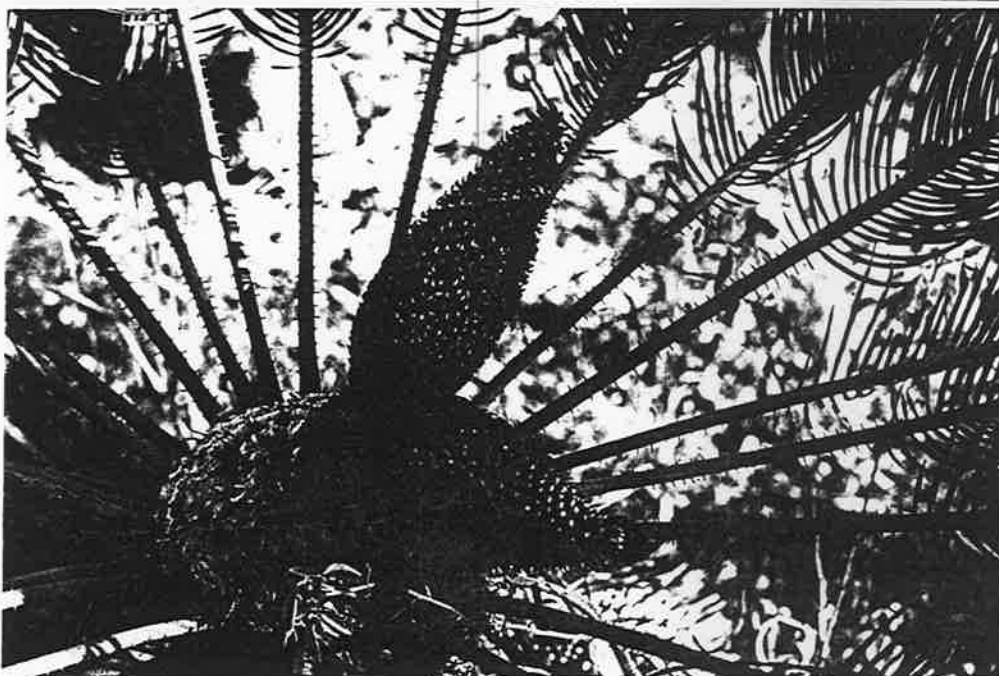
We saw 2 colonies of these Cycads in the Gemfields area both on the same soil type and really not very far apart. They don't seem to be scattered throughout at all, but can't see any particular reason for their limited distribution in the area.

- Irene Champion

CYCAS SP.
CRYSTAL CREEK
AREA COLONY
MT. SURPRISE
GEMFIELDS



MALE CONES.



Cycas Data Sheet

Sheet for Cycas sp. of Mt. Surprise Gemfields, Nth. Qld. -
 Lower O'Briens Creek. Lat: $18^{\circ} \frac{1}{2}'$ S. Long: $144^{\circ} 2\frac{1}{2}'$ E.
 Alt: 360 m. Collection Date 4.7.87. I.G.C. NO. 1

1. Identification: Cycas
2. Habitat: Open Low Woodland amongst granite outcrops -
 - Decomposed granite soil. Assoc. spec. Euc. spp Acacia spp.
3. Trunk: Ht. 1 m & Dia. 20 cm. PLB Branching: No
 (up to 3 m)
 Suckering: No
4. Female Cone. Sp./crown Approx 30. Ovules/sp. 3-5 ave, 6 max.
 Ht. of sp. 2 m. Seed Colour Blue orig. ? ripe.
5. Male Cone. Ht. Up to 30 cm. Dia. middle meas. 30 cm (1/2)
 3 (3/4).
 Peduncle ht. ---- Dia, ----, Spor. rows ----
 horizontal ---- vertical.
6. Leaves. No/flush ----, Length leaf ---- rachis 82 cm.
 Spines 24 each side No. per in 4. Spines located along base
 rachis.
7. Leaflets. Pairs/ leaf 103. Length at top 9cm. middle ---
 bottom 20 cm. each side of rachis.

Colour/luster - Blue (very vivid powder blue).

- * Note - Mt. Surprise is approx. 150 km's. due north of Chudleigh Station.

Two seedling plants grown from 1985 seeds have NOT retained the beautiful BLUE colouration, near coast.

Contributed by Irene G. Champion,
 20 Swift St., SLADE POINT.

Foot-note * Chudleigh Station is where the blye cycas "Glen Idle" was found. Are they similar?