

ASSOCIATED SOCIETIES FOR GROWING AUSTRALIAN PLANTS
INDIGENOUS CYCAD/ZAMIAD AND PALM STUDY GROUP
NEWSLETTER NO. 50
FEBRUARY - MARCH, 1992

All the very best for this new year, and hoping every member turns over a new leaf and sends at least one article for publication. What a grand newsletter this could be if only this happened. As already the strain of doing most myself with perhaps occasional help of a few, these few are like my life's blood, and it is impossible to really express just how much their effort is needed and appreciated.

Last November, I wandered a bit among N.S.W. members, gave a few talks, and thoroughly enjoyed being there.

As you know my two handbooks were published 1990 and 1991 and it was great to have them placed in a few S.G.A.P., libraries, and to meet a few faces, I only knew from letters. With our biennial conference coming up, SYDNEY 1993, it may be I will get down again (God willing).

Already there has been criticism about the zamia booklet, and not all constructive either. However this has been answered and it is to be hoped that the critic actually joins our group in the future, as it appears he does study well his N.S.W. cycads.

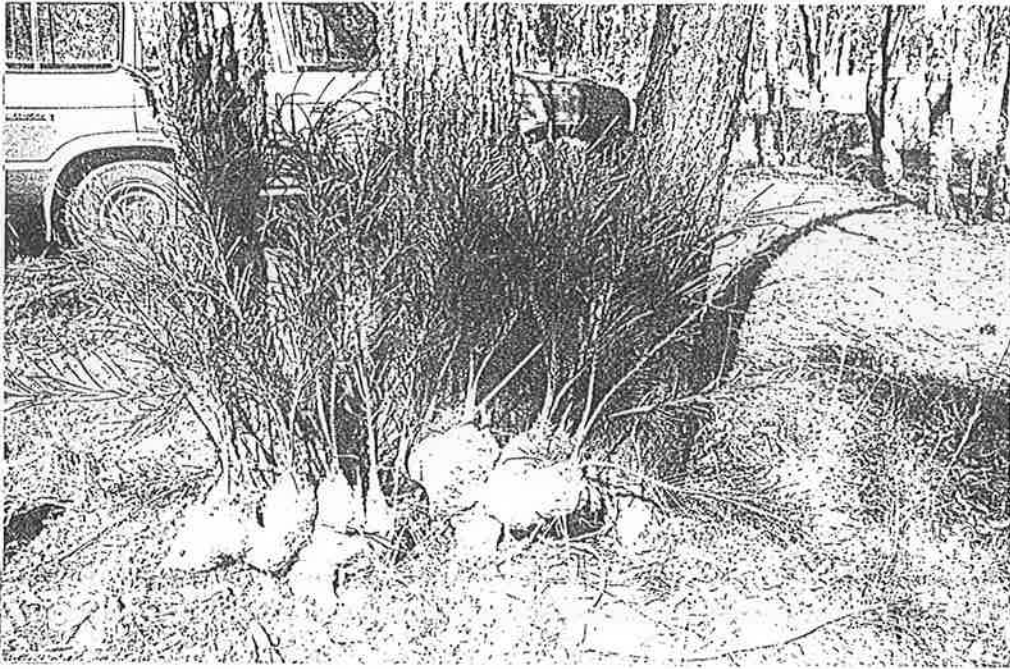
Being S.G.A.P., it must stand to reason our aims are conservation only and all other things are secondary.

It also is apparent that there is quite a lot of research now taking place in the field of cycadales study and although the researchers may have even bettered what we as a group have been endeavouring to do. None and I mean just that, can take from this study group the fact that we pioneered the present modern study. Seventeen years ago when I included the the word cycad in the name of P.A.C.S.O.A., and eleven years ago when we put together this group, most laymen and most nurserymen could not tell a cycad from a palm.

My thanks as always go to Margaret Telfer of Queensland, Ed Brighthouse, Brien Bosworth, Bob Dinte, Lou Randall, Vince Winkel, Brian Runnegar, all of Queensland, and all in the group.

In N.S.W., Geoff Long, has often helped us, as did the long serving Robert Riedl. Not to forget the massive help from Don Stallard of Northern Territory, and Perth and our member and very missed researcher Dr. John Maconochie of Alice Springs who before his untimely death did such great work with the cycas.

Two more W.A. members I must mention, being David Roche and Ken Adcock are good active members and researchers with the so far away *Macrozamia riedlei*.



The new sect. *parazamia fearnsidei*, Wallaroo Station, PACSOA expedition.

The biggest news last year was that finally and at last, evidence was coming to hand per our ever dilligent media that reason could be now obtained to outlaw the sale, protection, and perhaps conservation of the cycadales. Yes maybe they could at last be proven to be an instrument in the causes of Parkinson's disease or even Alseimer's disease.

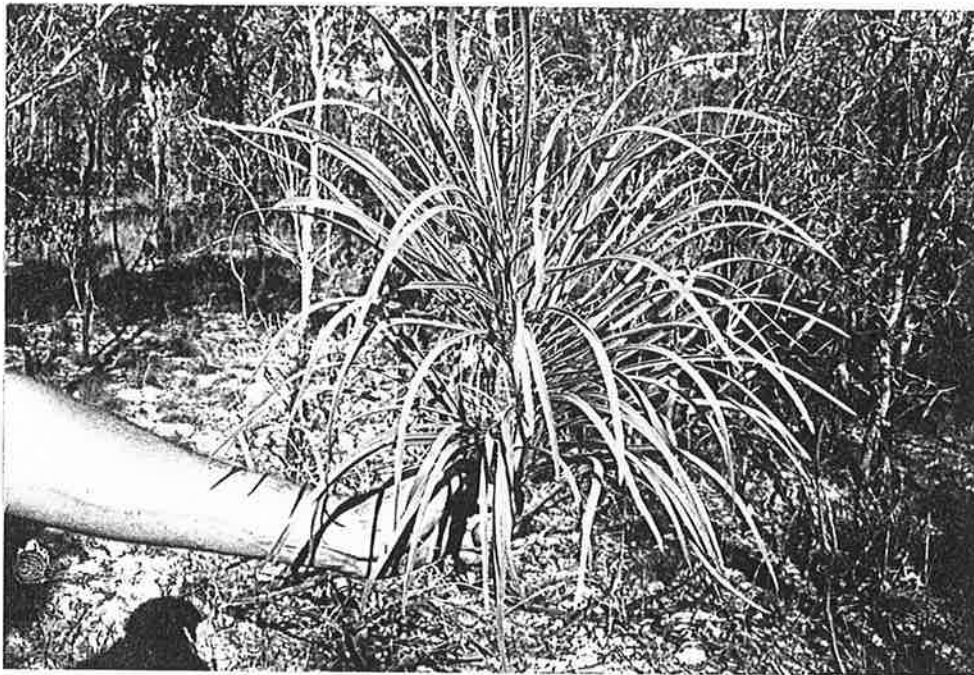
However, the media was a little premature, as a certain professor was misquoted, and to this date no such proof exists. The report was in regard to pollen. The native sago eaten for many years by native peoples in South America, Bicon, and the sago from the various cycas from China, Assam, South-East Asia, is still subject to investigation. Probably the research could in time include the various Australian cycas which after stringent processing was long eaten by our indigenou people.

The best news for this year so far is that at one botanist/author has been doing serious revision on some of the zamiads and indeed on some few that *have needed clearer definition.*

With permission from the Queensland Herbarium, I bring you the latest findings as printed in AUSPROBAILEYA NO. 3:-

David Jones who is a very general practioner botanist and a very fine author of several books of botanical reference has published a paper naming at least two new macrozamia sect. parazamia and upgrading others.

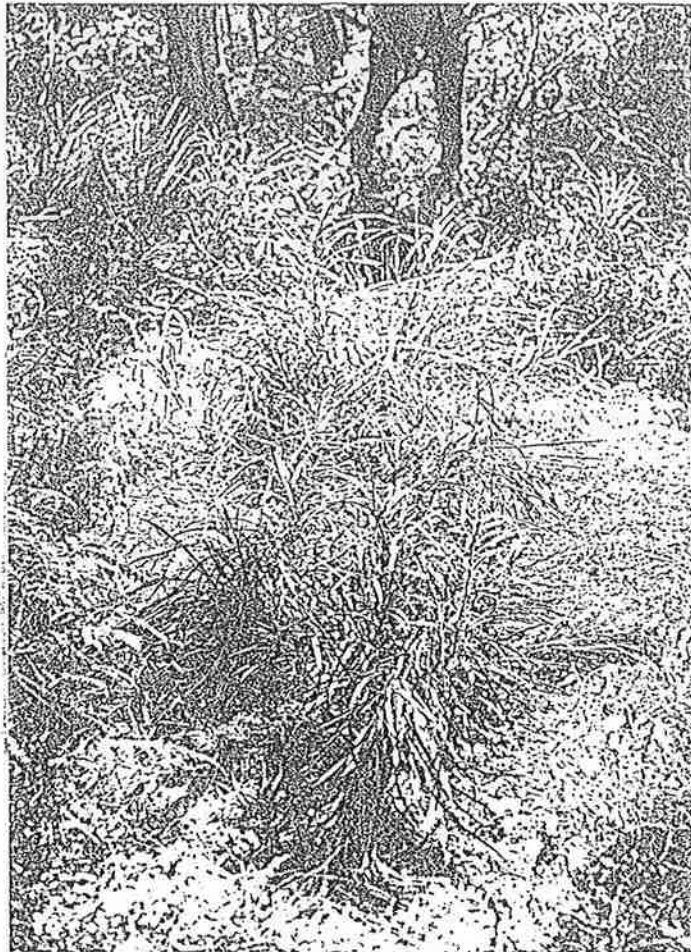
This is not a complete report but I have permission from David Jones to use part of the article. He states that taxonomic problems in the genus have been investigated by him the past three years. Therefore, the section Parazamia now has two new named members in what was once supposition, guesswork, and just plain lumping them with *P. pauli-guilielmi*. The one to deal with first is now named *Macrozamia* sect. *Parazamia lomandroides* (D. JONES) and is the very controversial one I have often been to visit and which was given the name of the broad leaf Bundaberg version of *pauli-guilielmi*. This botanist states the name is given because the plants resemble the species *Lomandra*.



sect. *parazamia lomandroides* - taken 1987

In his taxonomy, which by the way is beautifully and accurately done, Jones describes the spirally twisting rachis 1-8 times, 10-14 mm across at the lowest pinnae, but in his notes, reading further it is stated the nearest relative is probably *M. fawcettii*, 400 km. away. With the greatest respect for the writer I would have thought that the spiralling rachis of the Tin Can Bay type species would have placed it as a nearer relative.

The plants do resemble *Lomandra* as cited, and after viewing many in the known habitat I can state this appears to be on certain mature plants rather than on all I have seen. Plants we found in a grey to off white sandy loam under *melaleuca* scrub were multi-branched often triple headed, and the leaves (pinnae) were in a whorl around the rachis (leader's note). D. Jones also states that there are many small teeth on the apex of the pinnae of mature fronds and on the agrostic margin. This also in my mind, on viewing made it very different to what it was supposed to be (leader's note).



parazamia lomandrioides - McCormacks property
1983

The next plant discussed and given a name is *Macrozamia* sect. *parazamia* *fearnsidei* (D. Jones). This again is that unknown quantity sect. *parazamia* that I have viewed in the Expedition Ranges on the Wallaroo Station property of Mr. Fearnside, as also did David Jones. I commend the naming as this farmer does a lot of conservation work mostly on aboriginal artifacts and sights on his station. Normally I would rather see a descriptive name rather than a person's name (leader's note). As also stated this plant grows with *M. moorei* in the area, and when we first viewed it in July 1985 the discovery raised such questions as, is it a cross with *M. moorei*? (incidentally I have seen seed sold as *moorei lucida*, which I think were from this plant (leaders not

Jones states it possibly has an affinity with plurinervia and his reasoning is specific.

Fearnside commented that the new fronds were very toxic to cattle (note it is always the new fronds). In 1985 Mr. Fearnside told me his cattle sometimes nibbled the old fronds of *M. moorei* near the house with little ill effect. (leader's note).

Similar to the former *parazami* the subterranean caudex is ovoid, 15 to 35 cm' diameter, with fronds 70 to 140 cm's long on mature plants, dark green and lustrous 5 to 20 erect in a bushy crown, rarely nearly prostrate (Jones, taxonomy). Male cones more or less cylindrical curving with age. Female cones more or less ovoid 12 to 18 cm's by 8 to 10 cm's. (Jones). Typical apical spines on female cone.

David Jones states that *Macrozamia Mountperriensis*, which previously was reduced to synonymy and regarded as only a smaller form to *Macrozamia miquelii* (L.A.S. JOHNSON 1059) is a very stable taxon, retains all its different characteristics in cultivation, and exhibits little variation in its Mt. Perry district habitat. I quote . . . (D. Jones). For these reasons, it is here recognised at specific rank, it can be distinguished from *M. miquelii* by its smaller fronds and proportionally longer petioles, the absence of reduced spine like proximal pinnae much smaller cones and smaller seeds. (Unquote).

I make no observations re the upgrading of *M. plurinervia* to specific rank rather than ssp. status as the mentioned taxon is visually foreign to me, knowing it mostly from L.A.S. Johnson's 1959 papers.

Suffice to say David Jones has carried out this study dilligently and well and not as a means of destroying the family as quite often is the case. Subgroup members can get the complete papers and the *Austrobaileya* No. 3 1991 \$20.00 sub. to D.P.I. Qld. Herbarium, Meiers Rd., Indooroopilly, 4068.