

A.S.G.A.P. CYCAD, ZAMIAD AND PALM STUDY GROUP
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A merry seasons greetings to you all, this is written before Christmas but will reach you in the New Year. This has been a hectic year for me, full of controversy, but out of it has come quite a swag of valuable information re the cycadales even from critical sources whose criticism has really only served to help us all, and to enlighten.

Welcome goes out to several new members and especially to the leaders of the Fern study group and the Rainforest study group who I met at the seminar in Canberra last October.

Palm lovers will of course know of the great raging row over what happened re the filched seed of *Wodyetia bifurcata* and the great row arising from the illegal trade, plus the racket of Florida now selling us seed of our own native palm.

This happened a few years ago but it takes authorities just that long to get it published. The actual stands of palm in the area are not threatened or in any way depleted however, so what remains obvious is that a main governing body, and it is suggested the private Q.N.I.A. a well organised capable body of the NATIONAL PARKS supervise sales and distribution of any further seed as a very needed export for our State. The theory that fallen seed in the parks should be left there does nothing to preserve the species but only makes more food for rats and feral pigs. By the time you read this something will have been decided but the powers that be so let us hope it is for the benefit first of the Foxtail palm, next of the State of Queensland, and last but by no means least for the non commercial and commercial grower who appreciates having and knowing this lovely palm.

Just a reminder that fees fall due June 1st. This may seem early for a reminder, but if all fees were paid during June it would make running this newsletter far simpler than generallt waiting from 1st June to 1st December for all subs.

As I said before this is a most controversial year for cycadales and it appears the discussions will continue into 1993. I had a good close association with John Maconochie and his inclusion in our group was very valuable. You may know we used his keys with permission in the published Cycas booklet 1990. Now it becomes apparent his notes are passed on to Ken Hill of the National Herbarium of the Royal Botanical Gardens of Sydney. K.D. Hill is a competent Botanist who is doing the research for the Flora of Australia books and apparently has a dedicated research for the good of the cycadales, which is a fresh breeze in the conservation attitude, as many previous botanists were employed mainly to ascertain their weaknesses as to be applied to their eradication from primary industries land.

I thoroughly welcome true and dedicated study, everyone knows the need of it, I have also been against common name and place name usage on Cycas, but where no botanical data was available it was needed.

See comments throughout my two booklets re this subject!

Unfortunately Ken Hill's present study has put demise to many old favourites, the most prolific of this being *C. kennedyana* which in many situations now emerges as *C. megacarpa* (K. Hill).

I will never agree that a person's name does much in plant nomenclature preferring the use of explanatory latin, i.e. - megascarpa (large seed) etc.



Female Cones of *M. Mountperriensis*

However in the case of *Cycas* "Glen-Idle" Blue, the new name *Cycas couttsiana* at least is preferable to the former, which never did say anything about the species.

In the case of "Irene Champion's Blue Surprise" I am delighted that it is now emerged as the true type *C. cairnsiana*, and this opinion deserves applause that our S.G.A.P.'s Irene Champion was one of the pioneers to re-discover it. Years ago she wrote to me of the rich blue vee-shape pinnae of the Mt. Surprise cycas while she was doing lapidary study at O'Brien's Creek.

I recommend that all members get the *Telopea* 5 (1) September, 1992 edition and thoroughly read of the new namings and the reasons for doing it. Give me your opinions, we do need this rather than just my comments.

Another species, now named *Cycas aphiolitica* which once was "Marlborough Blue", that purloined most dug up cycas from around Marlborough districts.

One excellent quotation from K.D. Hill in *Telopea* September, 1992 concerns hybridisation and I quote from Hill.

Evidence is mounting to suggest there are weak fertility barriers between cycad species (Vorster 1986 Norstog 1990). This is shown by the numbers of natural hybrids being discovered. The lack of pollination specifically when combined with the apparently weak inherent fertility barriers results in the main reproductive barrier between cycas species in nature being geographic separation. Consequently populations of natural cycas species are geographically distinctly separated and Hybrid and intermediate zones are found where different species have spread to within population range of each other (unquote).