

# Pritchardia

March 2019 Newsletter

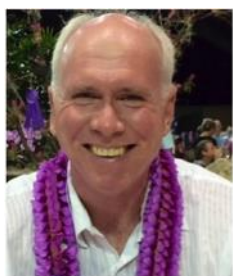
Issue #23



## HAWAII ISLAND PALM SOCIETY

WWW.HAWAIIISLANDPALMSOCIETY.COM

### President's Message



On behalf of the new board, I welcome all of our members to another great year of palms on the Big Island. By way of introduction, I arrived in Puna in the fall of 2012 after retiring from Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. I knew nothing about palms. I soon discovered the palm collections at the Pana'ewa

Zoo and Hawaii Tropical Botanical Gardens. I was amazed to learn that these exotic palms were readily available to ordinary gardeners. Thanks to HIPS members who invited me to see their gardens like Tim Brian and Bob Gibbens, Charlie Maas, Karolyn Lundkvist, Karen and Dean Piercy, I slowly learned the names of a few palms and which ones liked shade or sun. I was hooked. The large garden tours HIPS organized provided lots of ideas I have incorporated into my own landscaping projects. I'd also like to thank Mary Lock for the great work she has done the past four years to keep HIPS active and growing even through natural disasters. Although Mary and Mike have relocated to Maui, they will remain active in the Big Island palm community.

I'd first like to thank all of our commercial growers and hobbyists who provided the wonderful palms for the recent auction. This is our primary fundraiser for the year, so the generosity of Jeff and Suchin Marcus, Bill Austin, Jerry Anderson, Mike Merritt, Tony Armstrong, Tim Brian, Don Hemmes, and Mike Au is absolutely essential to all of our programs. And of course the auction only succeeds because of the spirited bidding of our members. Thanks to all of you, we raised over \$3900 this year.

The board's best intentions for 2018 were thrown into disarray with the Leilani Estates lava eruption. Despite the disaster, we were able to organize one tour on the East Side and our Kona friends came through with two great garden tours on the West Side. We expect to return to a more normal schedule this summer with tours to mature gardens we have seen before plus visits to some new gardens. We will be sending out dates and

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directions well in advance of each tour. Because these garden tours are so popular, our greatest challenge is accommodating large crowds. One solution that worked well last year was to schedule separate morning and afternoon tours of a garden to cut the number of cars and people in half. We may also use shuttle busses more frequently in order to reach gardens in neighborhoods without visitor parking. We are always looking for new gardens to see, so if you are willing to host a garden tour, please let us know. The host selects the date for the tour as well as setting the attendance cap.

Besides the popular garden tours, HIPS will have outreach booths at the zoo plant sale in May, the orchid show in June, as well as Arbor Day and Palms 101 workshops at the zoo. In August HIPS will be partnering with the local Boy Scouts troop to create a second cycad garden directly across the street from the existing one outside the entrance to the zoo. It has been several years since HIPS hosted a plant exchange, so we plan to have another one in combination with a potluck lunch later in the summer.

Perhaps the most important new initiative the board recently approved is a series of Open Houses for new members. The idea comes from mainland palm societies where members agree to open their gardens once a month to introduce a few new members to the world of palms. Please check out the article about these new one-on-one garden tours elsewhere in this newsletter. We know that our members enjoy sharing their beautiful gardens with visitors, so this should help bring people together.

HIPS is only as active as its membership. Every event from garden tours, to the February barbecue & auction, to lectures at the university requires planning and the work of volunteers. If you enjoy our events, please consider getting more involved by joining the board. No special experience or skills are needed, just a willingness to help. Our quarterly board meetings are open to all members. If you would like to see what goes into planning our events or if you would like more information on our financial health, come to a board meeting. We will be sending out notices about a week before each meeting along with a summary of the planned agenda.

Looking forward to see you this year.

Rick Kelley

### *Upcoming Events:*

- *Sunday, May 5: Membership outreach booth at Zoo Plant Sale*
- *Wednesday, May 8: Board meeting to finalize garden tour lineup. Members welcome, contact Rick Kelley at [rickkelley@att.net](mailto:rickkelley@att.net).*
- *May Garden Tour – Pending confirmation, more info soon.*
- *Thursday, June 27-Sunday, June 30: Community Outreach Display at the Hilo Orchid Show. Volunteers and materials needed. Contact Sara Wagner at [sara.anslow@gmail.com](mailto:sara.anslow@gmail.com)*

*For complete calendar of events, go to the Events tab on our website:*

*[www.hawaiiislandpalmsociety.com](http://www.hawaiiislandpalmsociety.com)*



# Top Palms (and cycad) of the 2019 Auctions

## *Pinanga aristata*

1 gallon

Donated by Jeff Marcus

Live Auction

Highest price of either auction  
\$200.00



*Pinanga aristata*

Borneo highlands form, Sarawak

Another palm with the 'Holy Grail' moniker. Incredible color and mottling on this understory beauty. Shade only, lots of water, and it grows to 6'. A palm you won't believe until you see it.

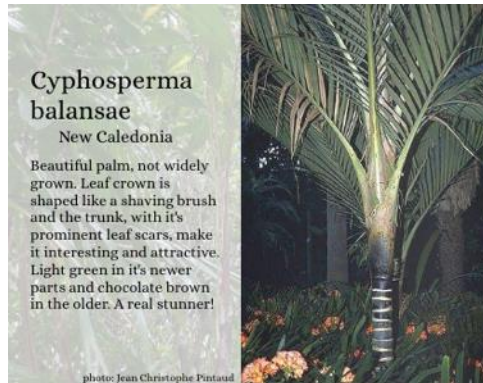
## *Cyphosperma balansae*

1 gallon

Donated by Jerry Andersen

Live Auction

Winning Bid \$130.00



*Cyphosperma balansae*

New Caledonia

Beautiful palm, not widely grown. Leaf crown is shaped like a shaving brush and the trunk, with its prominent leaf scars, make it interesting and attractive. Light green in its newer parts and chocolate brown in the older. A real stunner!

photo: Jean Christophe Pintaud

## *Iguanura wallichiana*

1 gallon

Donated by Bill Austin

Live Auction

Winning Bid \$130.00



*Iguanura wallichiana* var. *major*

Peninsular Malaysia

One of the most sought after palms since Victorian England, and for good reason. The large, thick, corrugated, ovoid leaves, with a purple hue when newly opened, remain specimen palms for the garden. Small, understory, shade loving, and loves plenty of moisture.

## *Cyrtostachys renda*

7 gallon

Donated by Bob Davis

Silent Auction

Winning Bid \$128.00



## *Pinanga speciosa*

1 gallon

Donated by Tim Brian

Silent Auction

Winning Bid \$115



## *Zamia portoricensis*

2 gallon

Donated by Don Hemmes

Silent Auction

Winning bid \$100



# Private Garden Tours for New Members

## Private Garden Tours for New Members

New people join HIPS because they want to landscape with more interesting palms than the dozen or so species of coconut, Areca, Manila, Royal, or foxtail palms offered at garden centers and farmers markets. But what's a new member to do when they can't tell the difference between a *Kerriodoxa* and a *Pelagodoxa*? While long-term members are interested in learning about the hottest new discovery, large garden tours with their emphasis on Latin names and taxonomy can discourage newcomers.

HIPS is launching a new program to gently introduce our new members to the wonderful world of palms. We will be offering individual tours to new members during special Palm Open House days. Members with palm gardens of different sizes and ages have agreed to open their gardens one day a month in the summer to interested new members. This small group interaction will welcome new folks as they see the many different ways palms can be incorporated into the Hawaiian landscape. The slower pace will let visitors ask more questions and a chance to write down names of especially beautiful species they may want to plant in their own garden.

We are still working on the details, but the Open Houses will probably operate by first confirming which gardens are available on a particular date. A map with the approximate locations of the available gardens and times will be emailed to our new members. Interested new members will RSVP to the tour coordinator which garden they would like to visit. The coordinator will only schedule one or two cars of visitors at a garden at any one time. The list of visitors will then be forwarded to each host, and the visitor will get the exact address of the garden.

Because of the size limit, we may not have space to satisfy every request immediately, but over the course of a year, we hope interested new members will have the chance to visit several different gardens. The Open House program will allow our members who have beautiful palm gardens, but cannot host regular HIPS tours to share the little patch of paradise they have nurtured over the years. Please consider adding your name to the list of destination gardens. You are not obligated to host visitors every month. We will always check with hosts before placing them on the upcoming roster. To add your name, contact Rick Kelley at [rickkelley@att.net](mailto:rickkelley@att.net).

Our website encourages palm enthusiasts from around the world to visit the Big Island to see spectacular palm gardens. Whenever we are contacted by an out of state palm nut planning a Hawaiian vacation, we would like use the list of Open House gardens as a starting point to connect visitors with private palm gardens, of course always with the host's permission.



*More T-shirts are here!  
More T-shirts are here!*

*T-Shirts have been re-ordered and will be available at upcoming events. Don't look good in blue? We ordered a heliconia pink and a red. To reserve a shirt, contact Sara at [sara.anslow@gmail.com](mailto:sara.anslow@gmail.com)*



## New Cycad Garden at Panaewa Zoo

Last June Pat McGrath approached Rick Kelley from the HIPS Zoo Crew about donating cycads to the zoo in memory of his wife, Kristen. Pat and Kristen came to Hilo Hawaii in the early seventies to start Hawaii Nurseries, Inc., they became famous for their Dracaena Hilo Girl™ and specimen Rhaps palms shipped to U.S. mainland and international interiorscapers.

Rick was able to bring together a variety of organizations including Hawaii County, Boy Scouts of America, and HIPS to begin to realize a new garden featuring the McGrath cycad donation. The new garden is a gift to future generations and honors the memory of Kristin McGrath who with her husband Pat helped build a horticultural tradition that grew up after the sugar cane industry left Hawaii. Learn more and follow the progress by going to the [Kristin McGrath Cycad Garden forum](#) on our website. You must sign in as a member to post.



*The cycads didn't exactly fit in Rick's truck. Workers load the cycads on a flatbed to deliver to the zoo.*

## Gardens Looking for New Stewards

Sometimes it is hard to leave behind a garden or nursery business. You hope whoever buys it will take care of it, but you never know. HIPS would like to keep Hawaii's residential gardens and nurseries intact by connecting gardeners to garden properties. Our newsletter goes out quarterly, if you or someone you know has a palm garden or nursery that will be going on the market, please contact Mary Lock at [marylock@sbcglobal.net](mailto:marylock@sbcglobal.net) so the MLS can be shared with our members in the next newsletter, June 30<sup>th</sup>. The following is not an advertisement, HIPS provides this list of properties to our members as a matter of interest.



### Lundkvist Garden

One of Hawaii's most beautiful and species rich gardens, the palm society has toured this garden many times. Karolyn is a long time member of HIPS.

Listing Link: [Here](#)



## Paniolo Palms

15 acres of Palms and Bamboo in pots and field stock. Bob Davis has been a staunch supporter of HIPS. His *Cyrtostachys renda* brought in the highest bid in the silent auction.

Listing Link: [Here](#)



## *Lock Garden*

Created and tended by two past HIPS presidents more than twenty years apart, the Hilo garden was originally planted by Richard Meyers in 1998.

Listing Link: [Here](#)



# Remembering William and Paula Merwin

“Mr. Merwin died at home, in his bungalow, surrounded by green. He was the tree in the middle of the forest. Not the tallest tree, or the one with the most leaves, but the tree in the middle — the one that got there first. The one that funneled rain and churned soil for those who came after. The one who returns to the ground, and nourishes us on what he leaves behind.”

A. Hope Jahren, author of the memoir “Lab Girl” and a professor at the University of Oslo. From her [New York Times opinion piece](#).



*The Merwins on their lanai in 2016, talking to HIPS members about watering palms with buckets, composting, and cursing the sugar cane beetles. Paula Merwin died March 8, 2017, William Merwin died March 15, 2019. Photo by Suchin Marcus.*

When HIPS came to Maui in August 2015 to visit the garden of the notoriously private former U.S. Poet Laureate and two time Pulitzer Prize winner, W.S. Merwin, many were surprised at the joyful welcome we received. Jeff Marcus and William Merwin had corresponded for decades, many of the palms in the Merwin garden were ordered from Jeff’s nursery, yet Jeff had never been to the Merwin garden. Jeff had brought a gift of a *Sabinaria Magnifica* in a 4 inch pot, the new genus and species had been formally published less than three years before. Even though his eye sight was failing, Merwin immediately slipped into his loafers and headed down the steep path to his potting shed cradling the small palm, leaving the rest of us scrambling to keep up with him. William asked my husband Michael to pot up the palm and it lived on the potting shelf until a few days ago, when long time caretakers of the garden Olin and Walter, with Sonnet, the new executive director of The Merwin Conservancy, Michael, and I planted it in the ground to stand in the view of the west lanai where William wrote much of his poetry.



*Sabinaria magnifica in the Merwin garden. Photo by Michael Lock*

In the months to come, the Merwin house and palm garden will be transferred to The Merwin Conservancy, a small organization founded by William and Paula Merwin dedicated to conserving both an extraordinary place and the sense of wonder that brought forth both Merwin's poetry, and his garden. It is the hope that other writers and poets will one day stare down on the astonishingly huge round leaves of the *Sabinaria magnifica* from the west lanai and find inspiration from a palm that was so recently unknown to the world, hiding on the border of Colombia and Panama.



Visit The Merwin Conservancy website for links to more articles about Merwin and tributes from around the world, [www.themerwinconservancy.org](http://www.themerwinconservancy.org).

*Photos above came from [The Discovery of the Amazing Sabinaria Magnifica](#) by Rodrigo Bernal*

## Note from the editor:

This newsletter goes out quarterly, the next newsletter will go out June 30<sup>th</sup>. 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).