



## Forecasting Our Future

Letter from the Executive Director  
Terrence Walters, Ph.D.

Thanks to the leadership of the directors and members, along with the commitment and hard work of the MBC team, we have made great strides towards meeting our purpose and Nell Montgomery Jennings' vision. This past year alone, we've integrated approximately 1,000 additional wild-collected, population-based plants into our collections. We've successfully networked with scientific and educational institutions worldwide, increased the usage of the collections, and expanded community outreach.

Although we are a very young botanical garden, the Montgomery name is already recognized for its commitment to high standards of quality and integrity both at home and abroad. Because the Montgomery team has now developed a complete scientific package to offer visiting researchers, I believe MBC is poised, during this decade, to become the source for scientific research on palms and cycads.

As we critically evaluated and updated Montgomery's Five-Year Strategic Plan during 2002, we not only had to ensure that we remain aligned and committed to the detail of the Plan but that the necessary resources will be in place to keep up the momentum of our rapid growth as an institution. This forecasting process clearly demonstrated that MBC's requirement for substantial, consistently available, and increasing financial resources should become a priority. In response to this need, the MBC Board of Directors approved the establishment of a department to support this objective.

In fall 2002, we were fortunate to have Mary Andrews accept the position as manager of the new Department of Development & Communications. All of us at MBC welcome Mary to our team as she brings a broad range of experience in communication, marketing, publication management, graphic design, as well as talents in writing, photography, and the arts. In addition to implementing a development program, she will be responsible for MBC marketing efforts, public relations, and producing publications, including *The Montgomery News*.

Assisted by our board, guided by the Strategic Plan, and sustained with the efforts of our new Department of Development & Communications, MBC's forecasted future will inevitably become MBC's reality.

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# ABOUT Montgomery Botanical Center



View of Nell's House looking across Coconut Lake in the Lowland Palmetum.

### A Page from South Florida History

Montgomery Botanical Center is the living legacy of Robert and Nell Montgomery, widely known as the founders of Fairchild Tropical Garden.

After Colonel Montgomery's death, Nell wished to perpetuate her late husband's name in association with his private tropical collection. Housed on their 120-acre Florida estate, it included the largest and finest private collections of palms and cycads in the world.

With the desire to focus her tribute on research investigations, Nell created The Montgomery Foundation, Inc., renamed Montgomery Botanical Center, as an independent nonprofit institution devoted to advancing the science of tropical botany.

### The Legacy in Action

Since Nell's death in 1990, MBC's purpose has remained aligned with her vision. The resources of Montgomery Botanical Center are directed toward developing scientifically valuable collections of tropical plants, particularly palms and cycads, to promote conservation, scientific investigation, educational opportunities, and exemplary landscape practices in a way that brings recognition and respect to the "Montgomery" name and enhances the field of tropical plant science.

To achieve its purpose, MBC's skilled staff works together as a team in four closely interrelated departments: Collections Development, Horticulture & Facilities, Development & Communications, and Administration.

Under their stewardship are thousands of palms and cycads representing hundreds of species, many of which

are threatened or endangered in the wild. To protect and perpetuate the genetic diversity of its collections, MBC actively builds its populations of cycads and palms by mounting 3-5 government-sanctioned collecting expeditions each year.

As the plants mature, MBC promotes conservation by harvesting the often-rare seeds for distribution to research institutions, botanical gardens, conservatories, and community organizations worldwide through its Seedbank Program, the largest of its kind in the U.S.

### A Place of Dynamic Resources

The varied resources found at MBC augment the scientific value of the palm and cycad collections.

Primary is the MBC database system. Details on the life history of each accession are recorded regularly and stored digitally for easy retrieval.

Enhancing the collections in the garden are fauna, flowering trees, distinctive geological features, as well as examples of landscape design excellence.

The Montgomery Archive documents the lives of Robert and Nell Montgomery in Florida, the architectural significance of the original structures on the property, as well the history and activities of Montgomery Botanical Center.

Researchers, botanical groups, historians, teachers, and students from around the globe come here to tap into MBC's diverse resources. With a guesthouse on site, MBC is a 24-hour-a-day functioning laboratory and classroom.

Locally, MBC participates in community projects, offers a wide range of educational opportunities, and provides a venue for symposia, conferences, workshops, lectures, and community events.

## How Does Our Garden Grow

by Dr. Terrence Walters, Executive Director  
and Dr. Larry Noblick, Collections Manager

There's much more to growth at MBC than what's rooted in soil—not that it's any small task to take a seed from an arduous expedition, nurse it through propagation and its juvenile stages until it's sited and planted, and then care for its health throughout its life.

In tandem with this generative cycle is a continuous process that goes to the heart of the MBC mission—documentation, documentation, and more documentation. The scientific information and horticultural observations MBC records are growing by leaps and bounds each year.

The collection, input, and evaluation of these data take an extraordinary amount of teamwork and a powerful database system.

Since all scientifically valuable plants must come from wild-collected seeds, the first documentation often takes place in a thick jungle or dry desert.

It's not enough that the expedition team finds, collects, identifies, cleans, packs, and ships the seeds to MBC. To accompany copious field notes, they photograph images of the parent plant including morphological features, habit, and habitat. Once the seeds and field documentation arrive at MBC, they are quickly dispatched to Collections Development. The CD team culls the seed batches that meet



Field Supervisor Barbara Bohnsack accesses the virtual palm and cycad collections in MBC's growing database.

MBC standards and assign each an accession number. Their virtual life begins as the documentation is entered into our database managed by the state-of-the-art application, BG-BASE.

From nursery to ground, their location is tracked using BG-Map, a program that links the plant records in BG-BASE with an Auto-CAD map, creating a dynamic GIS (Geographic

Information

System). Staff and researchers can, then, readily find the information about specific species as well as their precise location on the property. Map printouts can be customized according to need.

While the information collected to date begins to sprout electronically, the nursery horticulturalist continually feeds the database scientifically significant information from the day the seeds enter the nursery until the juvenile plants are incorporated into the ground collection.

As the plants mature, so does the data. The CD team, Seedbank coordinator, and horticulturalists work together to gather visual and written phenological data. The periodic growth and development stages of each accession, the

processes involved in pollen and seed production and harvesting, as well as plant health and care are recorded. Even the death of a plant yields useful information. Scientific research, horticultural experimentation, removals, relocation, natural disasters, or any other event or activity involving the plant rounds out the life history.

But compiling the data is just part of the effort. We are continually seeking new ways to improve access to the information. We've begun installation of the new upgrade to BG-BASE that provides Windows ease and enhanced reporting capabilities. Our team pushes BG-BASE to the limits of its capabilities, and challenges its program developers to refine their product for scientific reporting. MBC is one of their leading Beta testers.

Future plans include providing full online access to our information through a secured server, compiling daily weather statistics, and incorporating in the database the results of horticulture lab tests and research done on the plants with culminating publications cited.

Maintaining the growth and development of both scientifically valuable palms and cycads and the scientifically invaluable information about them—its quality and quantity—is what sets MBC apart from other botanical gardens. Our primary focus is on the scientific aspects of tropical botany, and we push all our resources so we can provide the best resource for scientists and students worldwide.

# COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT:

Sometimes it takes an excited enthusiast exclaiming about the breadth and quality of MBC's *Chamaedorea* collection or a visiting researcher who is visibly impressed with an unusual cycad to remind us that what they're seeing is a culmination of effort that goes back many years and to remote areas of the world. Invisible to those accessing the collection in a protected garden is the extraordinary knowledge, skill, and sheer effort it takes to obtain seeds in their native habitat. With most of the germinated seedlings they sent us now incorporated into MBC's grounds as healthy population representatives, we asked Botanists Dr. John Janovec and Amanda Neill to recall their adventures on the kind of expeditions that make it possible for MBC to carry out its purpose as an institution of science.

## Exploring the Palms and Cycads of the Maya Mountains of Belize:

Reflections on MBC-Sponsored Expeditions to Belize, 1999-2001

By Dr. John P. Janovec and Amanda K. Neill  
Institute of Systematic Botany, The New York Botanical Garden

The sun was setting as we reached a hilltop overlooking San Jose Village, a Mopan Mayan community located in the remote foothills of the southwestern Maya Mountains of Belize. We could see smoke rising from palm-thatched houses across the landscape. An orange haze dimly illuminated a forested, mountainous horizon.

We had been traveling all day from Belmopan, the country's capital city, on the washboarded, unpaved Southern Highway, through winding mountain passes. Enthusiastic but nervous on our first journey into the wild country of southern Belize, we could not have imagined what we were about to experience on this hilltop, or how it was to affect our lives.

This was December 1997, our first journey into Belize to collect plant material of wild nutmeg trees for a doctoral research program at Texas A&M. It is a small country nestled on the Caribbean Sea between the Yucatan to the north, Guatemala to the west, and Honduras to the south. We arrived with little knowledge of the country, its people, or their culture.

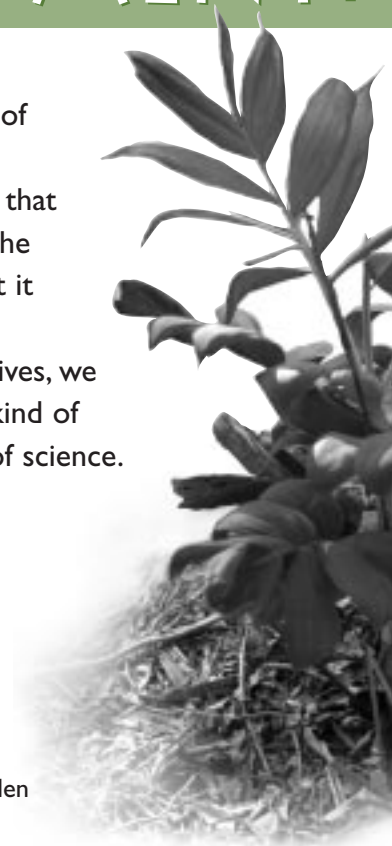
But we did have a list of collecting localities and the name of a man living in a remote village who was an experienced guide, Valentino "Tino" Tzub, a 40-year old Mopan Mayan.

And as we stood there on the hilltop—his hilltop—it wasn't long before we were greeted by members of his family. They directed our attention to a small-statured man resting in a fishnet hammock strung between two of the main posts holding up the palm-roofed house.

Noticing that we had official working papers about the protected forest in these mountains, he grabbed a wrinkled map of Belize from the wall.

He pointed out that he was the lead guide/porter for the CI's rapid-assessment expedition into the area. He then sketched the path of our hike and provided us with a list of food and supplies we would need. Led by Valentino, we headed north into the Maya Mountains the next morning, accompanied by an assistant guide and horse to carry our camping and collecting gear.

During this trip, we made a serendipitous discovery. Valentino happened to mention a special plant he referred to as the "corn palm." He said it occurred in only one cave and he wanted to show it to us. As we began to climb down into the vegetation-packed, crater-like formation, we realized the "cave" was actually more of a sinkhole. At the bottom, along with an ancient Mayan kiln and old ceramic shards, we found ourselves



# ON EXPEDITION

peering into a dense population of cycads. Following good botanical practice, we made plant specimens, including the staminate cones, and took photographs. Soon after we returned from this trip, two things happened in succession that led us back to Belize. Dr. Dennis Stevenson of The New York Botanical Garden told us about his recent discovery of the type specimen of *Zamia prasina* in London's Kew Herbarium, which we connected to the specimens from the sinkhole. We were then introduced to the Montgomery Botanical Center and learned of their support program for field collection expeditions focused on palms and cycads.

Supported by MBC collaboration, we returned to Belize in August 1999 to look specifically for cycads and palms. In addition to locating collections of cycad seeds, we found seeds of the palms, *Shippia concolor* and *Colpothrinax cookii*.

In 2001, MBC funded another project to support Valentino and his Mayan Rainforest Guide Service in exploring and monitoring palm and cycad populations followed by a collecting trip in June of the same year. This proved to be a highly productive collaboration. Valentino and his team located new populations of *Zamia prasina* (in both caves and sinkholes), among which we were able to find a cone with mature seeds.

An interesting addition to our group was a high school student from a Kansas soil ecology laboratory who came to sample soils of the *Z. prasina* habitat. Through his independent research project, he showed this unique cycad prefers a nitrogen-rich soil formed from bat guano beneath ceilings and walls of caves and sinkholes. This sinkhole species, referred to by Mayans as the "corn palm," must have a fascinating life history that needs to be revealed in future studies on its population biology, reproduction, and dispersal ecology. We speculated about rodents, bats, and birds

as the dispersers, but these ideas remain to be tested.

Hunting for other cycads and palm species led to more collecting and studying. We discovered a small population of *Zamia picta*, as well as palm species in the genera *Attalea*, *Calyptrogyne*, *Chamaedorea*, *Geonoma*, and *Reinhardtia*. We made the first reported voucher specimen of *Chamaedorea ebrenbergiana* in Belize, a palm with tightly-clustered ascending infructescences.

Valentino directed us to another collection of a *Chamaedorea* species that didn't fit the identity of *C. pinnatifrons* or *C. tepejilote*—the two common understory palms of Belize. It had larger leaves, stouter stems, and infructescences held low on the bare stem without surrounding leaves. These all deserve further investigation in the field, and different areas of the Maya Mountains should be explored to find other species.

While looking for palms and cycads in the Mountain Pine Ridge area, we took the opportunity to visit Caracol, a spectacular Mayan ruin near the Guatemalan border. The findings in Caracol amaze the archaeological teams working in the area: man-made reservoirs and canal systems, past use of mercury in art and worship, and the construction of large temples.

We climbed the many stone steps to the top of the towering main temple. As we stood at this high vantage point gazing through binoculars over the brilliant green mountains to the south and the burning and deforested hills of Guatemala in the west, we thought again about our unique experiences in the Maya Mountains—the organisms they harbor, and the watersheds they produce that protect the beautiful coral reefs off Belize's Caribbean coast.

We tried to imagine what it would have been like 1300 years ago when these temples were new. My thoughts took me back to the sinkholes and caves of the karstic topography of the Maya Mountains where the ancient distribution, propagation, and use of the *Zamia prasina*, as well as others like *Euterpe precatoria* and *Attalea cobune* are mysteries calling for further research.



We've remained in close contact with our friend and colleague, Valentino Tzub—the man, the guide, and his forest. Since the June 2001 trip, Hurricane Iris struck the Maya Mountains causing much natural damage to the forests and human communities of the region. From what Valentino tells us, the caves and sinkholes have been covered by debris and he has been unable to access the *Z. prasina* populations that we studied together.

We are fortunate that the viable seeds we collected are now growing under the protective green thumb of MBC staff; important germplasm has been preserved. However, we should strive to support local people such as Valentino in long-term monitoring, collection, and perhaps even reintroduction programs focused on palms and cycads of Belize and the Maya Mountains.

Only through collaborations with individuals like Valentino Tzub can we hope to understand and protect these important plants—or have someone to lead us to back to those populations now that the hurricane has passed.



## Good vs. Weevil

Entomologist seeks to stem invasion of exotic pest

Something ominous has landed on our shores and its name is *Myloccerus undatus*. A stowaway from Sri Lanka, this weevil is rapidly chewing its way across southeastern Florida and heading north. Its rapacious appetite includes foliage of an ever-expanding list of fruit trees and ornamentals.

There is scant information about this species or how to control it. Dr. Catharine Mannion, Research and Extension Specialist in ornamental entomology at the University of Florida Tropical Research and Education Center, undertook a study at MBC to remedy the situation.

After examining a weevil infestation at a local area, MBC offered Dr. Mannion the use of their resources to conduct a field experiment.

"We could provide an opportunity that was a perfect compliment to the lab work Dr. Mannion was already doing," explained Scott Massey, MBC's dicot horticulturalist.



Entomologist Dr. Catharine Mannion and MBC's dicot horticulturalist, Scott Massey, examine weevil damage on test plants.

"Lab-controlled results could, then, be conveniently verified with those in a real-world environment," Dr. Mannion added.

Coordinating her efforts with Scott over a 12-week period from September to November 2002, Dr. Mannion made significant headway. Using MBC's *Conocarpus erectus*

(Buttonwood) trees as hosts, she tested seven commonly used pesticides in three separate applications. All but two insecticides tested were found effective, if only in controlling the adult population.

"As a first approach, this study was very encouraging for the short-term," Dr. Mannion revealed, "but we will continue to work on identifying more environmentally-friendly and long-term solutions to this problem."

In this effort, Catharine Mannion is not alone. Entomologists such as those at the USDA-ARS at Chapman Field also have been coordinating with Scott to trap specimens at MBC for their research. With shared information among these scientists, finding a long-term solution for controlling this pest is hopeful as its behavior and life cycle are better understood.

If you think you have this weevil infestation on your property, contact your local county agent for identification and recommended control. The complete analysis of Dr. Mannion's research was submitted recently for publication.

Dr. Mannion can be reached at the University of Florida IFAS Tropical Research and Education Center in Homestead, FL, at 305-246-7000 or by email: [cmannion@mail.ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:cmannion@mail.ifas.ufl.edu). Dr. Mannion also maintains a website at [mannion.ifas.ufl.edu](http://mannion.ifas.ufl.edu).

## A Cycad by Many Other Names... Is a Nightmare for Botanists

"How can you save something you don't understand?" This fundamental dilemma concerning the increasingly rapid disappearance of cycad species was addressed at the Cycad Classifications Workshop hosted by MBC last April. Fourteen of the world's leading cycad systematists from all over the globe came together to clarify as a team what they believe to be true and important in the realm of cycad classification.

From this symposium is emerging what may be the definitive reference book on cycad taxonomy. The book of proceedings not only reports the current state of affairs in cycad classification highlighting areas of difficulty, but these top experts offer a suite of recommendations to ensure meaningful future advances in plant systematics. Not only will this benefit all plant systematists, but also individuals associated with plant conservation, public and private agencies dealing with endangered species, and graduate students in the field of classification.

Co-edited by Drs. Terrence Walters and Roy Osborne, the volume, *Cycad Classification: Concepts & Recommendations* will be published by CAB International Publishers of Oxford, England. It's expected to be available early 2004.

## Viewing Landscape by Design

The University of Miami School of Architecture chose MBC as one of several historical locations for two freshman student projects in architectural design.

On-site visits that included extensive research in The Montgomery Archive were complimented by walking lecture tours given by Property Manager Lee Anderson and Executive Director Terrence Walters.

The students literally went back to their drawing boards. One project had students render architectural drawings of MBC's historic Arthur Montgomery Guesthouse. The other required an original design for housing a visiting scientist who would conduct research on the property.

"A challenging task," noted Lee after observing the immense amount of information the students absorbed in

such a short period of time. "I was very impressed with what they came up with. I'm looking forward to a continuation of these joint efforts. We need to encourage student interest in the architectural needs unique to a botanical institution."



Property Manager Lee Anderson discusses the Olmsteadian influence seen in Montgomery's landscape architecture with UM students.

## Longwood Fellows Dig into MBC's Operations

For the elite few chosen as fellows in the University of Delaware's prestigious Longwood Graduate Program in Public Horticulture, on-site botanical studies in a tropical climate is a big plus.

MBC welcomed the opportunity to play an integral part in the students' South Florida tropical experience, not only by providing accommodations for their five-day stay and a comprehensive tour of the garden, but also by

exposing these future botanical leaders to MBC's unique organizational structure.

"As a functioning body, MBC's staff works both independently and, at the same time, very interdependently," Dr. Walters explained. "Wrapping our efforts around the scientific aspect of the collections, we heavily cross train and share goals across departments. The entire staff meets monthly to communicate the status of their activities

and to resolve issues. All this may be invisible to the casual visitor but it's the essence of how we stay keenly focused on our common purpose."

De Armand Hull, horticultural consultant at the University of Miami, coordinated the Longwood visit. As an alum of the Longwood Program, De hopes the South Florida visit will become an annual program activity. "These future botanical directors not only get to see tropical plants growing in their native habitat but can compare the management of five very differently structured gardens located in relatively close proximity to each other."

The students loved the enriching experience—and the opportunity to live in the middle of a botanical garden. Katie Elzer summed it up when she wrote, "Our visit to MBC was wonderful. We enjoyed walking through and studying the collection many times, at different times of the day. I'll be sure and spread the word about everything MBC has to offer!"



Longwood graduate fellows Shelley Dawson, Daniel Comenga, Katie Elzer, Cindy Sobaski, and John Harrod, listen intently as Dr. Terrence Walters explains the intricacies of accessioning and labeling each plant in MBC's cycad collection.

## Landscape at MBC: A Design Continuum

by Lee Anderson, Property Manager

As a scientific institution, landscape design at Montgomery Botanical Center follows a comprehensive and meticulous process that must fulfill multiple objectives. To maximize the scientific value of the collections, the population samples planted should simulate the dispersal patterns found in nature. The plan must accommodate access for research, data collecting, group lectures, and maintenance. As part of the MBC mission, the garden must also demonstrate exemplary landscape practices.

The ongoing consistency and quality of landscape design at MBC today is the result of a continuum of design theory that can be traced back more than two hundred years. The most influential figure on the timeline, however, is America's Father of Landscape Architecture, Frederick Law Olmstead.

Olmstead, who first promulgated his body of landscaping principles in the early to mid 1800s, is best known for designing New York's Central Park, The Biltmore Estate, and the U.S. Capitol grounds. He was deeply influenced by the textbooks of the 18th century English landscape designers and park planners, Gilpin and Price. Rejecting the extremely formal French style, Olmstead considered their work to be "the most educative books on park-making in our language or any language."

With a firm grounding in the past, this visionary who designed the first large suburban community and foresaw the need for national parks, was also a man of his own time.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the United States was a nation of tremendous potential wealth and opportunity. Railroads opened up wilderness territories as urban areas became crowded and industrial. It was the nation's vast forests, mountains, mighty

rivers and waterfalls that became the driving force in establishing a unique American culture.

Olmstead joined writers and artists of the time to create an oeuvre that reflected and romanticized the unique regional beauty and spiritual inspiration found in the American landscape.

You can still see it today in the dramatic landscapes of the Hudson River School painters and the vibrant watercolors of Winslow Homer. You can hear it in the transcendentalist writings of Emerson and Thoreau, the romanticized *Leatherstocking Tales* of James Fennimore Cooper, and the poetry of Walt Whitman. And you can feel it when walking through an Olmsteadian landscape design.

Olmstead's guiding principles embody the ordering concepts of unity, harmony, variety, and contrast "to gain," as he expressed it, "tranquility and rest to the mind." Further, he believed landscape design should incorporate biodiversity, use of native plants, and existing scenic characteristics to reveal, to enhance, and to preserve. A century later, a landscape architect who was mentored by Frederick Law Olmstead and employed by the Olmstead Brother's firm for over 20 years would incorporate these design principles on the property that would become Montgomery Botanical Center.



After purchasing 83 acres in the mid '30s, Robert Montgomery employed William Lyman Phillips to design Fairchild Tropical Garden. For the next 25 years his services were retained at both Fairchild and the future home of MBC, Robert and Nell Montgomery's private garden that housed the Colonel's prized palm and cycad collection.

Many of the Olmsteadian principles Phillips originally incorporated remain distinctive features of MBC: the formal Royal Palm Colonnade at the MBC's entrance that reveals and enhances the surrounding informal landscape, the showcasing of the natural escarpment, the grassy paths that meander and open up to allees and vistas, the "rooms" in which lecture tours gather to view individual collections.

Phillips' adherence to the principle of "Freedom in Informality" is still relevant in serving MBC's purpose. As Phillips wrote, "...the principle of informality would demand no specific form, or character in, the vegetation masses. The growths could vary in kind and size through the years without detriment to the general effect."

Key, also, to the MBC experience is the faithfulness to the principle of open spaces. "...without well defined openings, no sense of organization, no scenic effects would be possible...the mass needs the void to be effec-



tive...nothing can be seen except through space.”

After the death of Colonel Montgomery in 1953 and that of Phillips a decade later, the garden gradually slipped into a kind of horticultural entropy that wasn't reversed until 1990.

With the passing of Nell, the full responsibility for carrying out the specific wishes in her Will fell to the MBC Board of Directors.

To fully realize

and expand the concepts that Robert and Nell Montgomery had originally established, they hired the world-renowned design firm, Sasaki Associates.

Sasaki chose Joseph Hibbard, another advocate of Olmsteadian design theory, to take up the challenge. After evaluating the history of the property and its status, Hibbard developed a comprehensive Master Site Plan in 1992.

From the influence of 18th century park planners on the principles of

Olmstead, through Phillips, and finally Joe Hibbard, come the underlying philosophy of architectural planning that determines the placement of every plant that's put in the ground at MBC, each and every year.

It is this great enduring tradition of classic American landscape design incorporated in the Master Plan that will unwaveringly guide MBC into the future, even though it may take generations to realize the full conception of beauty and harmony intended by the designer.



## from THE MONTGOMERY ARCHIVE

### The William Lyman Phillips Collection

The Phillips Collection includes original plans, manuscripts, news clippings and a sheaf of correspondence spanning the years from when Phillips was first engaged by Robert Montgomery in 1938, through the many decades working on projects with the Colonel and later with Nell Montgomery Jennings, until memorials were written after his death in 1966.

In Nixon Smiley's article, "William Lyman Phillips: A Recollection," he describes Phillips as intellectually independent with a "whimsical sense of humor tinged with a touch of cynicism."

Although a publicity-shy man who seldom wasted words, he had very definite opinions. Smiley tells us that he disliked overused words like "landscaping" and "beautification" and quotes him as saying, "I haven't met anybody who could tell me what they meant by 'beautification'...The landscape architect draws a plan designed to bring about some order. In the order, we can only hope to find beauty."

In this, his loyal client never doubted Phillips' success. Found in a note to Phillips, Nell wrote, "I am grateful to you for so many, many things—and all the beauty you have helped to create. It should make you happy."



MBC Palm Horticulturalist Laurie Danielson (center) shows visiting scientists, Drs. Barry Tomlinson (right) and Jack Fisher, a healthy rattan specimen (front).

Dr. Tomlinson hopes the results of scientific investigation might lead to large-scale agriculture of rattans. Outside of a few local gardens close to its native habitat, commercial harvesting of rattan takes place in the wild, threatening both species and habitat.

In support of conservation efforts to prevent its depletion in primary forests—and in response to Dr. Tomlinson’s encouragement—MBC has dedicated six acres to a rattan collection to provide scientifically based populations for research.

Laurie Danielson, MBC’s palm horticulturalist, admits it’s been a challenge. “We’ve found young rattans are very sensitive to South Florida winds. It requires us to build a habitat for each plant to simulate a forest canopy.”

Laurie, showing Drs. Tomlinson and Fisher the separate populations of rattans where she’s testing tolerance to various types of soils and conditions, told them, “All this information is being added to the life history of each plant in our database for future studies.”

“This is the very best use of a botanical garden,” Dr. Tomlinson said. “Instead of having to mount an expedition, researchers can find all the materials for studying palms right here in South Florida. That’s why I come here.”

## Grappling with Rattans

When Dr. Barry Tomlinson, eminent expert and author on the structural biology of palms, came to Miami to confer with his colleague, Dr. Jack Fisher, Senior Research Scientist at the Fairchild Tropical Garden Research Center, they couldn’t resist looking over MBC’s budding rattan program.

While rattans are familiar to most as furniture, and they comprise 20% of the species in the palm family, there is very little scientific knowledge about the plant itself. Dr. Tomlinson has been

actively promoting the study of this remarkable climbing palm.

“I call them, The Champions,” Dr. Tomlinson remarked. “Their tap roots extend deep into the ground sending water up a remarkably long stem system to the very top of the jungle canopy. The leaves above the canopy can then photosynthesize food that the stems in turn carry down to the roots. It’s been recorded that a single plant has grown to a length that would stretch out over two football fields.”



## MADE FOR THE SHADE

For the second consecutive year, MBC hosted over 700 potted visitors—nursery trees waiting to be placed in a good home through one of Miami-Dade’s Adopt-a-Tree community events. This innovative program seeks to bolster the county’s shade canopy by offering native ornamentals and non-citrus fruit trees free to its residents. Beyond that, the program provides guidance and information about placing the tree as well as its planting and care. A new service offered this year, the program will plant those trees selected by the elderly and handicapped. For more information, call 305-468-5900 or visit their website: [www.miamidade.gov/adoptatree](http://www.miamidade.gov/adoptatree).





▲ Sue Katz captures her colleagues (front to back) Scott, Vickie, Mike, and Larry as they trek through the Fakahatchee Strand.

▶ FPS biologist Mike Owen and volunteer Karen Relish (center) brainstorm with MBC staff.



## Expedition Proves Fruitful for Both MBC and FPS

With the help and guidance of Mike Owen, biologist for the FPS (Florida Park Service), MBC was able to begin building a comprehensive collection of native Florida palms. In November 2001, Owen trekked with MBC's Dr. Larry Noblick, Sue Katz, Scott Massey, and Vickie Murphy through swamp and brush in the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park to collect wild seeds of Florida's *Acoelorrhaphe wrightii* (Paurotis Palm) and *Roystonea regia* (Royal Palm).

A year later, Mike Owen, accompanied by park volunteer Karen Relish, came to Montgomery to get advice on protocols for collecting phenology data. They had a productive round-table discussion with MBC specialists Barbara Bohnsack, Laurie Danielson, Norma Armstrong, and Vickie Murphy.

"We ended up brainstorming," Barbara recalled. "What came out of the meeting was the opportunity to collaborate on a scientific comparison of the phenology of the Park's wild *Roystonea* versus those growing here in cultivation from the same stock of seeds as palms found in Fakahatchee."

Before leaving, Owen and Relish were taken to Nursery Horticulturalist Barbara Judd to have a look at the *Roystonea* "babies" in MBC's greenhouse.

"This is exciting," Owen said as he looked over the healthy seedlings. "I never had any idea before if seeds produced by the Fakahatchee Royal Palms were viable or not."

Some of the nursery plants may eventually end up back in their native habitat. Propagating more than what MBC will plant, extras will be offered as a donation to the Florida Park Service for restoration work.

## Educational Tours: Through the House, Over the Bluff, and Around the Palms and Cycads

Although Montgomery is best known for providing researchers access to its collection and database, MBC conducts up to 50 customized tours a year to groups, clubs, and associations as part of its educational mission. With the diversity of interests and depth of information continually expanding, this past year was both busy and mutually rewarding.

Palm enthusiasts flew in from California and met separately with three horticultural specialists for a professional

look at the collections in all stages of development, as well as share their personal observations of palms.

The University of Miami geology students examined the county's best example of a Silver Bluff Escarpment and unusual sinkhole formations, and UM architecture students studied MBC's landscape design and historical buildings.

Artists and photographers were especially interested in seeing flora and fauna both on the grounds and in MBC's collection of botanical illustrations.

A tour for the mayor of Coral Gables highlighted MBC's participation in community endeavors; representatives from other botanical institutions were given an insider management's eye view of the operations; and experts affiliated with MBC gave comprehensive lecture tours.

And clubs and organizations, from the Coral Pine's Garden Club to The Nature Conservancy, found that specialized tours offer a unique benefit when reserving MBC's facilities for their meetings.

For information about reserving space for a meeting or scheduling a tour, call 305-667-3800 ext. 11.



▶ Consultant Murray Corman speaks on the ethnobotany of MBC palms.



◀ Nurserymen learn about cycad pollination from expert and MBC volunteer, Larry Krauss.





## Former Volunteer Chosen to Head New Department

by Terrence Walters, Executive Director

Last October, Mary Andrews assumed her new role as manager for the newly created Department of Development & Communications, responsible for activities vital to MBC's continued growth: fundraising, marketing, communication, and publications.

I first met Mary in July 2001 at a time when I was committed to upgrading the quality of photographs being taken of the striking Ikebana arrangements of MBC plants created by volunteer Mayna Hutchinson. Mary, a professional photographer, artist, graphic designer—and a good friend of Mayna's—quickly offered both her expertise and equipment to MBC. Her artistic talents combined with a life-long passion for nature perfectly matched my need to capture the beauty, balance, and harmony of Mayna's arrangements.

From that moment on and throughout the 12-month project, I grew to respect Mary's accomplishments, not only in every photograph she created, but also in her other areas of experience: publications, marketing, public relations, and communication. As an MBC volunteer, Mary mounted three photography shows of images she took while exploring Montgomery's grounds. For each exhibit, she created accompanying brochures to promote MBC's mission and provide a venue for fundraising.

In one of these brochures, Mary wrote, "These photographs are my attempt to capture this world while

refreshing the eye with a capacity for surprise and delight." Mary had succeeded, in fact beyond my belief, in capturing the amazing and often surprising world of palms and cycads. Others thought so too. She was soon invited to write a feature article on palm photography for a California palm journal accompanied by photographs from the exhibit. We were proud that one of her photographs—and an MBC palm—was chosen for the cover of *The Palm Journal*.

All of us at MBC are looking forward to working with and learning from Mary on the MBC programs she is overseeing. With such past careers as director of advertising and publications, director of marketing, creative director, art director, production manager, artist, and photographer, Mary brings a unique perspective and set of experiences to the Center that, I believe, will smooth out the bumps as we journey down the road toward MBC's future.



## A Fond Farewell to Deena

At the close of 2001, Deena Decker-Walters, MBC's publications coordinator and editor, decided to leave her position with MBC knowing the responsibilities would be placed in good hands with Mary Andrews, our new Development & Communications manager.

During her seven-year tenure, Deena produced 14 outstanding informative issues of the newsletter. The MBC historical brochure she produced received a state award for design and printing. In 1996, Deena created the style, color, and format for all of MBC's stationery, including the unique design for our business cards—not an easy task with an Executive Director who is very particular about type fonts, paper, and a precise shade of green. Deena also took on the responsibility as MBC photographer when we required pictures for The Montgomery Archive or future newsletters.

Over the past seven years, Deena and I have worked closely together on each issue of the newsletter. Deena's talent for absorbing the massive stacks of notes I accumulated for each issue and condensing these sketchy notes into well written informative articles was truly amazing.

Her editorial and design skills have made *The Montgomery News* an internationally respected botanical garden newsletter. I have enjoyed and cherished our time together developing MBC's major publication for outreach and education. The directors, members, and staff would like to thank Deena for everything she has done and accomplished for MBC, and wish her continued success in her own field as she can now direct more of her time and energies towards uncovering and reporting the secrets of the world's squashes, gourds, and melons.

Terrence



Christine Emshousen  
Assistant Palm  
Horticulturalist



Jody Haynes  
Cycad Biologist



Annamaria Richcreek  
Administrator

## Two Biologists and Administrator Join MBC Team

**Christine Emshousen** enhanced the Horticulture Program by becoming the third full-time horticulturalist at MBC dedicated to the care of palms. Christine brings a Master's degree in environmental horticulture from the University of Florida and quality experience as a research assistant in the UF Plant Micropropagation Laboratory.

As Cycad Biologist, **Jody Haynes** directs the development and expansion of MBC's cycad collection. He earned a Master's degree in Biological Sciences from the University of New Orleans. Jody's broad range of experience includes seven years of scientific research and 14 years teaching biological sub-disciplines. He's led scientific collecting expeditions, developed a network of cooperative relationships internationally in the botanical arena, and currently serves as secretary on the board of directors of The Cycad Society.

**Annamaria Richcreek** came on board to become Administration Manager Evelyn Young's right-hand person. She oversees the administration office and is the initial contact for MBC visitors. Anna brings a wealth of experience from managing her own transcription company and coordinating major events.

## IPS Biennial in France

Terrence Walters, as a director and member of the International Palm Society, participated in the 2002 IPS Biennial held in southern France, September 19-27. Over 175 individuals, representing more than 15 countries, attended. Montgomery was well represented; Terrence met up with MBC volunteer Larry Aronson and MBC members Libby Besse and Randy Moore. Congratulations go to Randy who was recently elected to the IPS Board of Directors.

"After a full-day IPS Board meeting, we spent a week hearing lectures from internationally recognized palm scientists and touring magnificent, often historic, palm gardens from the port city of Toulon and across the Riviera to Nice," Terrence reported. "One highlight was a special day at the famous succulent garden, *Jardin Exotique*, in Monte-Carlo."

"Speaking with dedicated palm enthusiasts and scientists, I was especially pleased to learn how much MBC is recognized and respected worldwide for its commitment to developing a major scientific and educational palm collection."

## Turf Decisions

MBC's landscape crew hit the grounds of the Bayshore Golf Course last November to evaluate their pilot project in the use of a recently licensed salt-tolerant turf cultivar, *Paspalum vaginatum*, commonly known as Seashore Paspalum. Eyed for its possible use in the Lowland Palmetum where brackish incursion creates a problem growing traditional grasses, there seemed to be no downside to an even broader use.

"It's a beautiful densely growing grass," reports Property Manager Lee Anderson, "green on the front and backed with silver. Depending on use it can be mowed at different heights and maintain the same lush appearance."

"More importantly," he added, "it's use fits in with the conservation agenda at MBC. Brackish irrigation not only conserves Dade's

fresh water, it also has an herbicidal effect. With additional spot treatment of economical rock salt on weeds, fungus, and fire ants, the grass would have no need for expensive toxic herbicides. And because saltwater acts as a growth regulator on species that tolerate it, time spent on mowing and trimming would be reduced."

Their host, Jim Torba, topped off their field trip with a tour through their maintenance, debris-recycling areas, and newly constructed pump house. The state-of-the-art facility features four 1800 gpm pumps controlled by a computerized weather tracking station. "Fortunately, there is an override switch on the system," Torba told them. "My staff doesn't need a computer to tell them when it's raining!"

## Expedition in Paraguay

Larry Noblick returned from a four-week expedition gathering data he needed for the NSF-funded study "Phylogenetic Study of Subtribe Butiinae (Cocoeae, Palmae)," as well as collecting seeds for MBC. He collected 56 accessions, and was especially excited to find the rare palms, *Syagrus lilliputiana* and *Syagrus (Butia) campicola*. Larry tells us he has found positive proof that the *Syagrus campicola* is a "bona fide *Butia*." He's writing up his exploits and findings for lectures and publication. Stay tuned.

## Miami-Dade Honors MBC

Mayor Alex Pinelas and County Commissioner Jimmy Morales gave a special presentation on December 19, 2002 at the Miami-Dade County Commissioners Meeting to publicly thank Montgomery Botanical Center and other community partners for participation in the success of the 2002 Adopt-a-Tree program. Lee Anderson, MBC's key player in the program, attended and accepted the plaque and Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of the Center.

# SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS

by Evelyn A. Young, Volunteer Coordinator



## Volunteers Speak Up About Their MBC Experience

The lifeblood that keeps a nonprofit organization healthy is often the steady stream of quality volunteers who bring with them energy, life skills, and professional expertise. This is especially true at Montgomery Botanical Center. We gratefully acknowledge that our special corps of volunteers are community partners who play a catalytic role in MBC's success.

As a scientific institution that features a unique mixture of botany, horticulture, geology, landscape design, conservation, database management, history and the arts, we attract volunteers with a broad spectrum of backgrounds, interests, and talents.

But the reasons why these extraordinary individuals come here and why they stay are best expressed by the volunteers themselves. So we conducted a mini survey from a cross sampling of volunteer positions. Here is what they told us.

**Jean Stark**, a professional meeting planner who grew up around science, was attracted to MBC's scientific focus. Working with the database, she's become an integral part of the Collections Development team.

"I'm always learning new things about plants—seeds, growing conditions, method of collection."

What does she like best about volunteering at MBC?

"The people. My job. Learning new 'stuff.' I feel that I make a real contribution here and that I am important to MBC."

**Katherine Byrholdt**, a former court reporter with the U.S. Federal Court in Washington D.C. and world traveler, came to volunteer for MBC when we were digging out from Hurricane Andrew. She did a top-notch job coordinating with FEMA, and has never left. Today, she's found a happy niche in The Montgomery Archive.

"What I like best is learning the history of the Center, about the Montgomerys, and others who made it possible. I also like the people here."

**Mike Kambour**, a former physics teacher and photographic workshop instructor, can be found on the grounds digitally capturing the life history of our plants. Back in Collections Development, he prepares his images for the database.

His fascination with palms and cycads brought him here and "the friendly and interesting staff." Why does he stay? He loves his work assignments and he's "learned how to use a digital camera with Adobe Photoshop, and is learning how to identify palms and cycads..."

Another database photographer, **Ed Bell**, came from Washington D.C. as a home improvement contractor. Ed was introduced to MBC by an enthusiastic friend who volunteered here.

"The combination of photographing plants and processing the images on the computer appealed to me. Friendly employees and volunteers make coming here a pleasant social experience. The pretty and tranquil environment makes MBC a pleasant place to work."

**Larry Aronson**, with a background in landscape irrigation, has been a continuing MBC volunteer for over a decade. Besides plant basics, he's had hands-on learning experiences with cycad pollination, taxonomy, and Collection Development's BG-BASE program. What he likes best is "interacting with staff and other volunteers."

From the voice of these volunteers and others we have highlighted over the years, we hope what you hear is that each and every one is a valued member of the MBC family and an important stakeholder in carrying out our mission successfully—that we respect who they are and what they contribute.

*If you are interested in seeing what you and Montgomery Botanical Center can offer each other, we would welcome your application to our Volunteer Program. Call Evelyn Young at 305-667-3800 ext. 11 for more information.*

Volunteers pictured above, from left to right:  
Jean Stark, Katherine Byrholdt, Mike Kambour, Ed Bell, and Larry Aronson

## Institutions and Organizations Benefitting from MBC Resources

Whether it was participation in our Seedbank Program, scientific research, educational opportunities, or community projects, MBC is proud to have benefitted the following institutions and organizations in 2002.

Albert Einstein College of Medicine, New York  
Botanic Garden of Naples, Italy  
Botanic Garden of Smith College, Massachusetts  
Botanical Garden of Brasilia, Brazil  
Central Florida Palm and Cycad Society  
Columbia University, New York  
Cornell University, New York  
Dolmestch Arboretum, Colombia  
Durban Botanic Garden, South Africa  
Fairchild Tropical Garden, Florida  
Farmingdale University, New York  
Florida International University  
Florida Nurserymen & Growers Association  
Fullerton Arboretum, California  
Harry P. Leu Gardens, Florida  
Harvard University, Massachusetts  
Herbarium, Institute of Botany, Academia Sinica, China  
Humboldt State University, California  
Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, France  
Institute of Botany, Academia Sinica, Taiwan  
Instituto de Ecología, Mexico  
Instituto Plantarum, Brazil  
International Palm Society  
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Karoo Desert Botanical Garden, South Africa  
La Paludiere, France  
Lehman College, New York  
Longwood Botanical Gardens, Pennsylvania  
Louisiana Palm and Cycad Society  
McMaster University, Canada  
Miami-Dade Department of Environmental  
Resources Management, Florida  
Miami-Dade Park and Recreation, Florida  
Michigan State University  
Missouri Botanic Garden  
National Botanical Institute, South Africa  
National Herbarium of New South Wales, Australia  
National Museum of Natural History, Washington D.C.  
National Tropical Botanical Garden, Hawaii  
New York University  
Nong Nooch Tropical Garden, Thailand  
Northwestern University, Illinois  
Palm & Cycad Societies of Florida  
Palm & Cycad Society of Southwest Florida  
Palm Society of South Texas  
Palmetum, Canary Islands, Spain  
Parks and Wildlife Commission, Australia  
Quail Botanical Gardens, California  
Queensland Herbarium, Australia  
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, U.K.  
Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney, Australia  
Santa Barbara Botanical Garden, California  
Singapore Botanic Garden  
South African Palm Society  
South Florida Palm Society  
Strybing Arboretum & Botanical Gardens, California  
The Cycad Society  
The New York Botanical Gardens  
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UF, Tropical Research and Education Center  
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University of Reading, U.K.  
University of Stellenbosch, South Africa  
University of Texas  
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Florida  
Walt Disney World Company, Florida  
World Conservation Union (IUCN), Switzerland

# THANKS

## FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN 2002!

The Executive Director, the managers, and the MBC team wish to acknowledge the following individuals, foundations, companies, and associations who helped make a difference in 2002.

### FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS INDIVIDUALS

Andrews, Mary  
Baltin, Sylvia and Lee  
Beaty, John T.  
Besse, Libby and By  
Bressler, Judith and Richard  
Brown, Edwin II  
Brown, Joan  
Brusberg, Marian Jennings  
Byrholdt, Katherine  
Cortner, Betty and Mark  
Curtis, Mary Ann and Alan  
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Goldstein, Joy and Larry  
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Seymour  
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Johnson, Beverley  
Kelly, Barbara and Nicholas  
Kelly, Eileen and Loyd  
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Linares, Maria  
Mahaffey, Libby and Bruce  
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Merritt, Michael  
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Noblick, Florence  
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Roberts, Susan and Alfred  
Sacher, Dorothy and Charles P.  
Shea, Catherine and Michael  
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Stark, Jean and Eugene  
Sternberg, Karen and Paul  
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Walters, Deena and Terrence  
Whitelock, Eva and Loran  
Wiener, Don  
Zierer, Frances

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### IN HONOR OF MAYNA HUTCHINSON

Diggers Garden Club

### IN MEMORY OF PAUL ANDERSON

Mcllwain, Lisa and Tom

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Central Florida Palm &  
Cycad Society  
Dade Chapter Florida  
Nurserymen & Growers  
Association  
National Science Foundation  
South Florida Palm Society

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*If you want to know how you can join Montgomery Botanical Center's commitment to the scientific investigation and education of tropical botany through much needed financial support, goods, or services, contact our Development & Communications manager, Mary Andrews, at 305-667-3800 ext. 35.*

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### The Montgomery News

is published twice a year by the Montgomery Botanical Center, a nonprofit private operating institution specializing in tropical plant research collections emphasizing palms and cycads.

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Operating hours: M-F, 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

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putting the fun  
in fundraising as  
she demonstrates  
her “White Magic”  
cleaning wonder  
in this 1946 photo.



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