

MONTGOMERY BOTANICAL CENTER & CYCAD GARDEN 1993 RESEARCH EXPEDITION:  
THE CYCADS AND PALMS OF SOUTHWESTERN CHINA  
by Dr. Si-lin Yang

During the period October 10 to November 22 of 1993, Dr. Si-lin Yang and Ms. Hong Pu (Assistant Professor and Lecturer with the Department of Horticulture, Southwest Agricultural University, ChongQing, Si-chuan, China) studied the populations of the cycads and palms of southwestern China. This research expedition was jointly funded by the Montgomery Botanical Center, Inc., and the Cycad Garden (Los Angeles).

During the expedition, they visited eight wild cycad populations, four wild palm populations, and nine local cycad collections and/or nurseries in thirteen countries of Sichuan and Yunnan Provinces, China, and Laocai Province, Vietnam. Additional populations were located for future field research. The 30 kilograms of plant material collected included the specimens and living samples of at least seven Chinese *Cycas* species and four palm species. A portion of the material was deposited in China to improve the collections and herbaria of local botanical gardens and universities.

Based on the 1992 and 1993 China expeditions, the Montgomery Botanical Center now possesses one of the most complete and most thoroughly documented research collections of Chinese cycads in the world.

The results of the expedition suggest that: 1) *Cycas szechuanensis* is truly extinct in the wild in Sichuan; 2) the description of the most northern cycad population in China (in Ningnan, Sichuan) should be N 26 45' (early authors incorrectly put it at N 27 11'); 3) *C. yunnanensis* is a form of *C. micholitzii* var. *simplicipinna*; 4) wild *C. siamensis* does not occur in southwestern China; and 5) the swollen trunk species of cycads from Guangxi should probably be put under the name of *C. inermis* rather than *C. siamensis*.

Based on field observations during the 1993 expedition, Dr. Yang is now describing two new *Cycas* species and new variety of *C. micholitzii*. Their observations suggest that the region of Southern China and Indo-China is the center of diversity of the genus *Cycas*.

During the 1993 research expedition, Dr. Yang and Ms. Pu observed just how seriously endangered Chinese cycads really are. All the populations they visited were decimated. Many Chinese species are now becoming extinct in the wild before scientists are able to collect and describe them.