

# Montgomery Botanical NEWS

***Advancing Research, Conservation, and Education  
through Scientific Plant Collections***

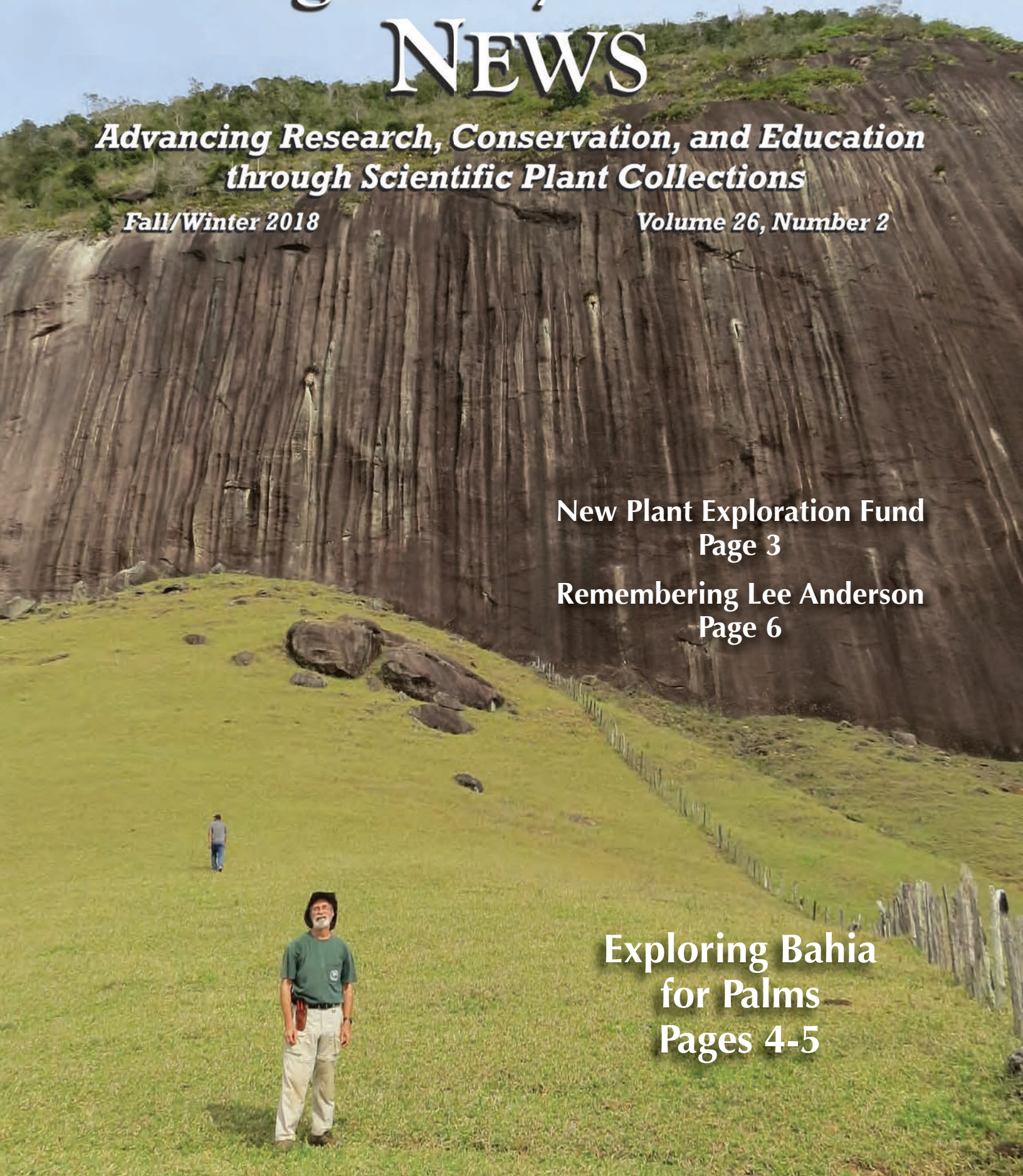
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# New Eyes on Bahia

Hidden treasures are there if you look!



**Left:** *Syagrus cataphracta* was rediscovered in the dry interior of Bahia. This palm was originally described as a variety of *Cocos flexuosa* in 1826! Larry moved this species into the genus *Syagrus* and elevated it to species as part of his major work on the genus in 2017.

**Center:** Larry Noblick and Lazaro Silva stand with an impressive individual of *Attalea pindobassu*. **Right:** Larry with *Syagrus santosii*, also seen in the background photo. Larry and his colleagues brought these imperiled palms into protective cultivation.

**On the Cover:** Dr. Larry Noblick and colleagues climbed many inselbergs (abrupt, isolated, rocky hills) in search of palms. This one was home to *Syagrus pseudococos* and *Allagoptera caudescens*.

**Background:** *Syagrus santosii* only grows in one river valley that was recently dammed. This killed most of the original palm population, leaving only these plants above the new water line.





A new discovery! *Syagrus guaratingensis* only grows on inaccessible granite inselbergs such as the one featured on the cover. These nearly inaccessible granite walls hold amazing botanical treasures.

Bahia, Brazil is like my second home. I spent time there as a Peace Corp volunteer, university herbarium curator, and doing my doctorate research. Nevertheless, I am amazed by the novelties that continue to be discovered. Its diversity of habitats is equally matched by its diversity of palms. Just this week I reviewed a new palm species, which brings the total in Bahia to 74. Compare that to just 15 in the Continental US!

I again explored Bahia recently and we discovered another new species near Guaratinga: *Syagrus guaratingensis*. In reality, I first saw it in 1989 on an isolated inselberg in the Atlantic Forest (see page 8), but only now, armed with more knowledge, was I able to recognize it as distinct. A similar thing happened with the rediscovery of *Syagrus cataphracta* from the Bahia's drier interior. The lesson here is never be afraid to revisit, you may be surprised what you discover with your "new eyes." You may stumble onto a rare find as we did, or as my friends did with the new palm species they discovered growing on a single inselberg less than two miles from where we collected *S. guaratingensis*.

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