

My Garden in Florida

By Henry Nehrling

"A garden that one makes oneself becomes associated with one's personal history and that of one's friends, interwoven with one's tastes, preferences and character, and constitutes a sort of unwritten but withal manifest autobiography. Show me your garden, provided it be your own, and I will tell you what you are like."

—*Alfred Austin.*



HERE is no place in this world that I love so much as I love my garden. There is nothing like it in Florida. It has characteristics entirely its own—features not found anywhere else. Garden and plant lovers from all parts of the country are charmed with it. Thousands come and go each year and enjoy with me its many attractions. Though I had pictures of tropical beauty in my mind when I planted it I never followed strictly the rules of the landscape designer. There are no lawns and broad open spaces. Single specimens, groups and dense masses of trees, shrubs, palms and bamboos are the main features of Palm Cottage Gardens. There are wild portions with narrow paths leading from one place to the other. Native trees and shrubs form the foundation of the garden, Japanese and Chinese evergreens, hardy bamboos and palms closely follow in their wake. The assemblage of plants is a most refined one, beautiful alike in foliage, form and flowers. All the real aristocrats of our native flora, as well as those of the far Orient have found a place in my collection, where they grow side by side with plants from Australia, South Africa, Brazil and Argentina. Hundreds of strictly tropical species were interspersed but almost all of them succumbed to the killing freezes in the course of time. My losses were quite disastrous at times but a larger number of the very best and most ornamental species came out of the struggle for existence without



PALM WALK FROM HOUSE TO THE LAKE
PALM COTTAGE GARDENS
GOTHA, FLORIDA

much harm. All of the plants set out had to struggle for existence. This is high pineland soil, and it contained originally not even a particle of humus. It had the appearance of pure white sand. In its highest parts the clay stratum lies from twelve to fifteen feet below the surface. During the dry season all the moisture was rapidly absorbed and the soil became as dry as dust. Forest fires frequently raged over the place, not only consuming every leaf and grass-blade but also injuring and killing the plants that had been set out. Sometimes the water in the adjoining little lake rose two and more feet during the rainy season and killed all the plants along its borders. Cattle and hogs breaking through the fences were a constant menace for many years. Lack of means handicapped me from the very beginning, and only by great personal sacrifices was it possible to reach my goal. Great and many were the obstacles placed in my way, but I never lost confidence in the final success.

Early in the winter of 1883, a friend of mine the late Francis von Siller, a kindred spirit, went to Florida to investigate and study the climate and soil of the state. He made excursions all over central Florida and finally found a place in the high rolling pineland, ten miles west of Orlando, which appeared to him a perfectly ideal locality—healthy, picturesque, dotted with numerous lakes, and well adapted for orange culture and winter homes. Mr. H. A. Hempel from Buffalo, N. Y., had settled here several years before, and had named the place Gotha, after his place of birth in Thuringia. Mr. von Siller wrote me about his discovery, and I requested him to select for me a good tract of forty acres. This land is situated only a half a mile north of the village. In April, 1886 I made my first trip to the land of sunshine and flowers to inspect my property and to study its possibilities. I was very much pleased with the results. After having closely examined the many tropical plants in the various gardens, my enthusiasm was aroused and it grew more intense from year to year, though I realized the nature of the poor dry soil and the many obstacles in the way before me. My first start was to have five acres cleared and to plant an orange grove. The ornamental part was vividly in my mind but my means did



COCOS GAERTNERI IN CENTRE
PHOENIX SYLVESTRIS IS THE
PALM ON THE RIGHT

not allow me to follow my inclinations immediately. Not until November 1890 was I able to start my garden. Ten acres were set aside for this purpose, and five acres in the highest and driest part were cleared and ploughed. The last remnants of a once magnificent pine forest, about a dozen tall trees, were left intact, and a number of very small Live Oaks and Willow Oaks were also preserved. Some of these trees, particularly the Live Oaks, are now dense broad specimens about fifty feet in height.

Fortunately I found here another kindred spirit, a man well educated and an ardent lover of nature, Mr. Franz Barthels, who had settled near my place. He understood me and was willing to carry out my ideas and care for my plants, while I was following my occupation as custodian of the Public Museum in Milwaukee. The very first step I took was to search the hammock woods, five miles away, for plant material. Mr. Barthels and I walked this distance repeatedly and carried the plants home on our shoulders. They consisted of small specimens of *Magnolia grandiflora*, *Osmanthus americana* (American Olive), *Loblolly Bay*, *Wax Myrtle*, *American Laurel* (*Ocotea Catesbyana*), *Red Bay* (*Persea Borbonia*), *Laurel Smilax* (*Smilax laurifolia*), *Sweet Bay* (*Magnolia glauca*), *Pieris nitida*, *Zenobia pulverulenta*, *Leucothoë racemosa* and several others. The magnolias are now large and stately trees, the pride of the garden, at least fifty feet tall; the Loblolly Bays, though always found near water, have assumed a good size, being about thirty feet high, and the American Olives are dense and broad specimens. The Wax Myrtles have formed round and dense clusters of bright green, and the Smilax clammers high up into the trees. We also collected little plants of the Carolina Jessamine, one of our most beautiful and refined native plants. It covers at present quite a number of trees in my grounds, and when in bloom, the brilliant yellow flower-bells exhale a most delicious perfume which pervades the air of the entire garden. I also planted several Hollies (*Ilex opaca*), the Dahoon (*Ilex Cassine*), Wild Plum trees, the Prickly Ash (*Fagara Clava-Herculis*) and a dense growing Hawthorn (*Crataegus*) with pendent branches. Hollies and Dahoons are at present a feature in the garden, but

the Prickly Ash became a nuisance by spreading over territory not belonging to it, and it had to be removed. The common Wild Plum (*Prunus umbellata*) forms a very dense, reclining, broad and shapely tree, while the Chickasaw Plum (*P. angustifolia*) has formed dense thickets by underground runners. It is almost impossible to keep it in bounds, and it never should be planted where space is limited. Deciduous trees and shrubs form only a very small and inconspicuous part in my garden. They should not be planted unless they are exceptionally beautiful. Such a small tree, one of the very best of leaf-shedding natives, is the Fringe Tree (*Chionanthus virginica*), common in many of our hammocks. Its leaves are large and leathery and almost evergreen, and when in bloom early in March it is a most lovely object, the pure white fringe-like flowers covering it like a sheet. This tree or tall shrub was also collected and carried to the garden.

This first planting was done under considerable hardships. The November sun was still quite hot and the road and the trails through the woods often invisible. Plant collecting in a dense hammock has its unpleasant features. Many of the thickets were almost impenetrable, and the extremely dense masses of Saw Palmettos in places were so tall that I at one time lost my way. This particular hammock had the reputation of being alive with huge diamond rattle-snakes. And there were ticks and red bugs, all with the wild desire to get into your flesh. Such things annoy one at the time, and the carrying home the collected plants seemed like a huge burden. But all my various adventures in the Florida hammocks and swamps were a source of pleasure after I had come home, and I always felt a strong desire of making these excursions again, even if I should have to undergo similar or worse hardships.

In Milwaukee I at once began to build a greenhouse, partly to imbue my sons with a love for tropical plants and to train them in their cultivation, partly for my own pleasure, but mostly for the purpose of growing the plants necessary for my Florida garden. Good friends helped me along whenever they

could. Mr. Henry Pfister, for many years head gardener of the White House, in Washington, sent me many plants which he thought could be grown successfully in Florida. I received seeds from many sources, particularly from Blumenau, Brazil, and from Buenos Aires, from La Mortola, Italy, and from Hong Kong and Darjeeling. The late Mr. C. Werckle of Ocean Springs, Miss., and his enthusiastic son, Carlos Werckle in San José, Costa Rica, presented me with many most beautiful shrubs and bulbs. Carl Sprenger, at that time near Naples, Italy, one of the most enthusiastic and learned gardeners of our time, enriched my collection with all the various *Crinum*s he had brought together, and with all the varieties of *Amaryllis Belladonna* he grew in his own garden in southern Italy. Mr. Erich Wittkugel of San Pedro Sula, Honduras, made excursions into the mountain forests and tropical lowlands and collected for me many bulbs, but especially Bromeliads, Orchids and epiphytic Ferns, which he consigned to me in large dry-goods boxes. I opened with much anticipation and intense interest the packages of plants and seeds that came by parcel post from Trinidad, Jamaica, Caracas (Venezuela), Mexico, Honduras, Costa Rica, Barbados and Australia. The late Mr. James Douglas, one of the best-known English gardeners of his time and a frequent contributor to *The Gardener's Chronicle* and *The Garden* enriched my collection with the finest new *Hippeastrum*s (*Amaryllis*) from his own glass houses. Dr. E. Bonavia sent me a number of his finest hybrids of *Hippeastrum pardinum*, among them the singularly beautiful "Queen of Spots" and "Spotted Orfeo," and Mr. James O'Brien added several tubers of the then new and magnificent *Gloriosa Rothschildiana*, which since has proved such a great success in Palm Cottage Gardens. This climbing Lily, one of the most gorgeous of bulbous plants, is one of the glories of my garden, flowering more or less profusely all the year round. I have raised a number of fine hybrids from this species and *G. superba* and *vice versa*.

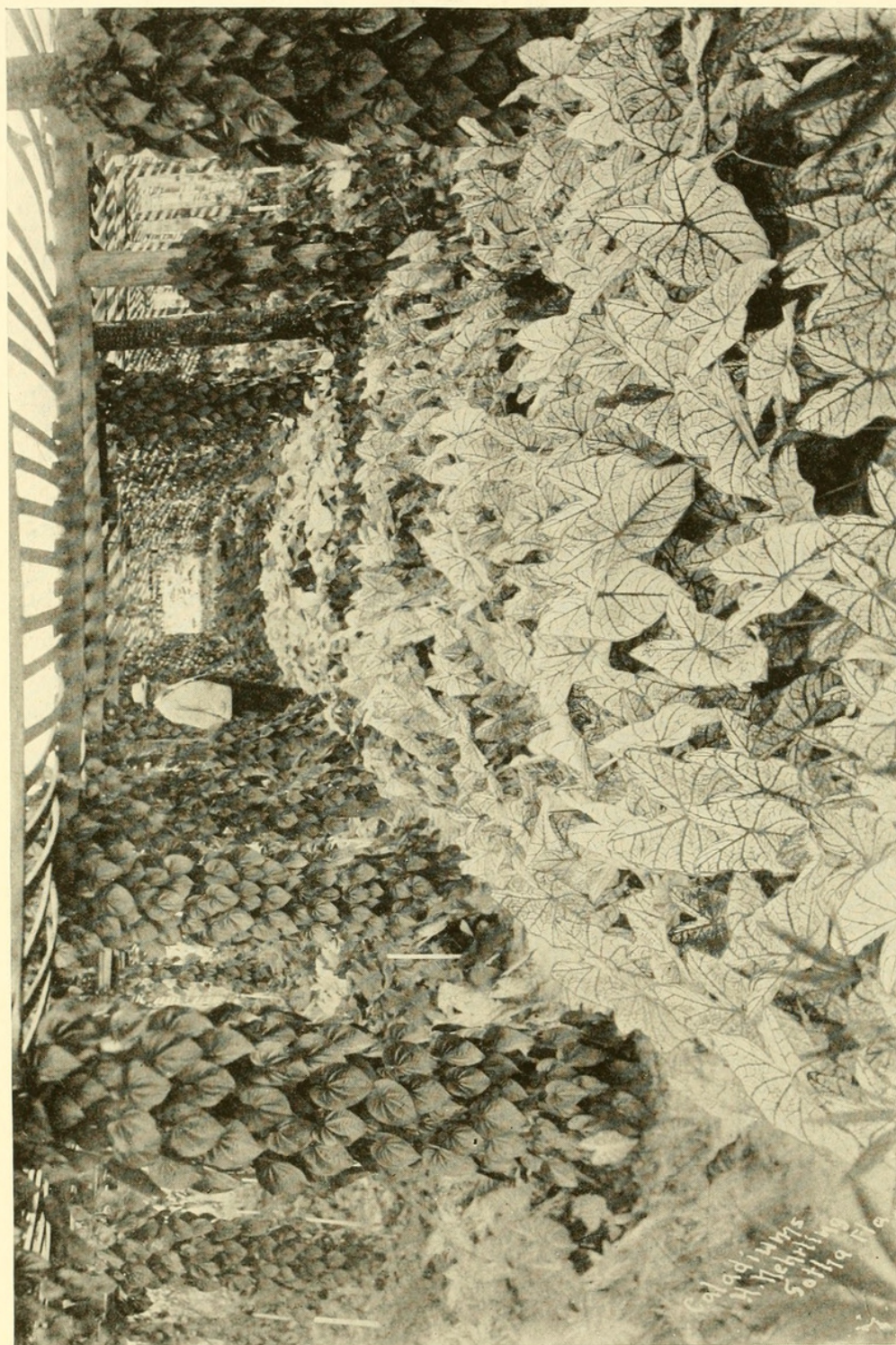
I have two fine specimens of the rare *Talauma Hodgsonii* in my garden. When reading in the Himalayan Journals about this tree and its grand foliage and purplish-red flowers I was

very anxious to obtain seeds from it. I wrote to Mr. Kennedy, Superintendent of the Botanical Station at Darjeeling, Sikkim, India, and at the same time to Sir Joseph D. Hooker, for many years director of the far-famed Kew Gardens, and one of the noblest and most amiable men it ever has been my good fortune to correspond with. The seeds came and I planted them at once. Several germinated, and I was in possession of a few fine small seedlings when Sir Joseph D. Hooker's answer came—quite a lengthy letter and very friendly. He told me that the seeds of *Talauma Hodgsonii*, as well as those of other species of the Magnoliaceae, soon lose their germinating power, and that so far it had been impossible to raise this species from seeds in Europe. The best way would be to obtain young plants from the Himalayas in Wardian cases. Only one specimen of *Talauma Hodgsonii* lived. As I was afraid to lose it I sent it to my friend Dr. William Trelease of the Missouri Botanical Garden, where Mr. August Koch, one of the head gardeners, succeeded in raising a second plant by layering. This is the one now in my collection.

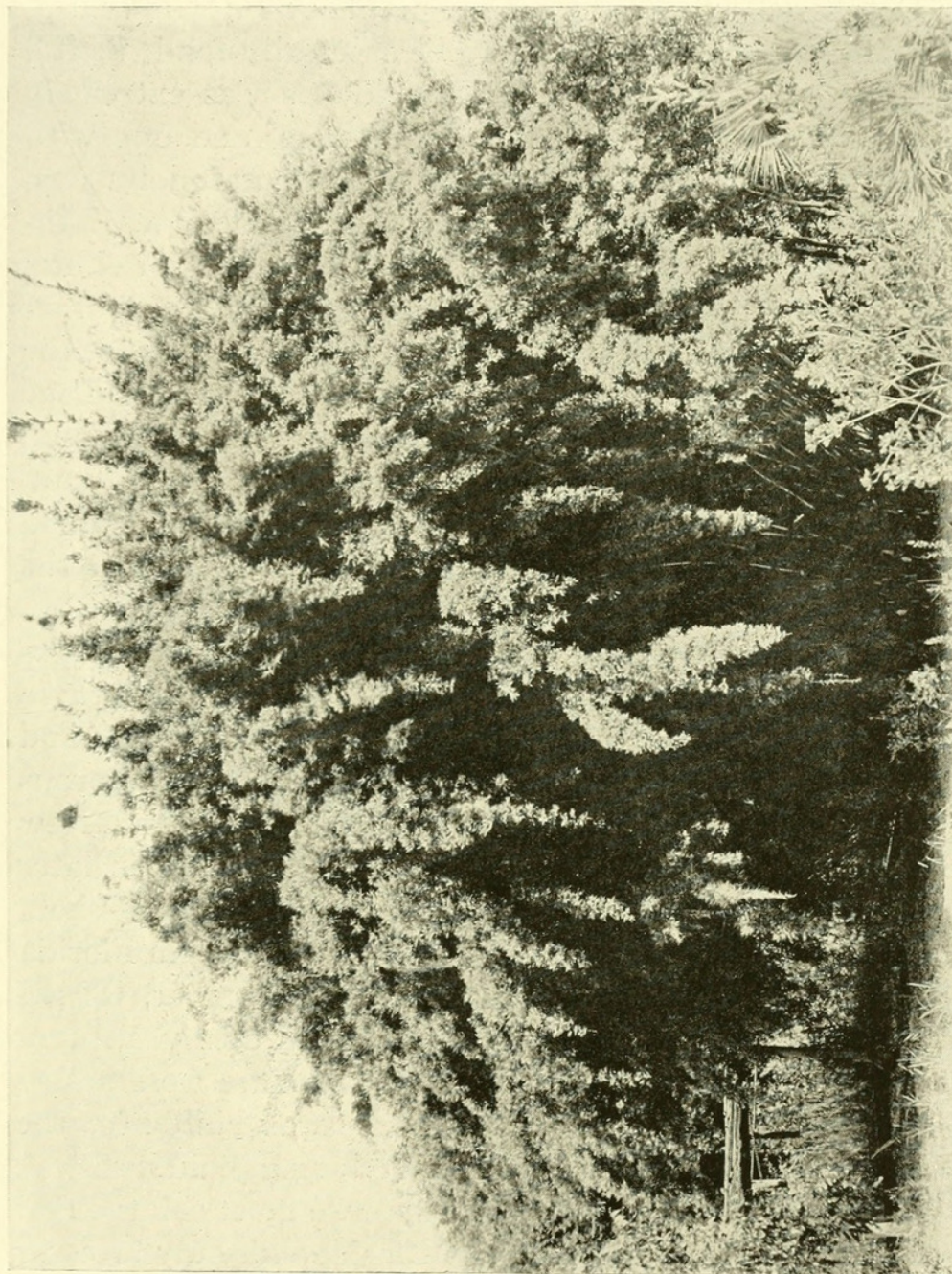
The year 1893 may be properly called a red letter year of my life. It is the year of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Many a day I spent in the White City. It appeared to me like fairy-land, and the whole is now in my memory like a dream. The impressions of the combined exhibits of rare tropical plants and of the many large single specimens of palms and foliage plants will never fade from my memory. Here I saw, for the first time in my life, masses of new Fancy-leaved Caladiums. They came from the largest hybridizer of these brilliant foliage plants, Adolph Lietze in Rio de Janeiro. When I admired the richness, brilliancy, delicacy of these often translucent colors I was reminded of art, not of nature. In this as in many other cases nature simply surpasses art. Mr. Lietze has raised in succeeding years much finer, much more varied, much more brilliant hybrids, but at that time even connoisseurs, like Dr. L. Wittmack, the editor of *Die Gartenflora* and others were of the opinion that the climax had been reached. Today those on exhibition and most all of Lietze's later hybrids are

in my collection, and the display in my Caladium lathhouses, where hundreds and thousands are grown in dense masses, cannot be compared with anything else, be it flowers or foliage plants. There is nothing like it. They stand incomparably above all other plants in lasting beauty, variety and brilliancy. The thousands of visitors who come and go when the Caladiums are at their best, from June to October, have only an eye for the brilliancy of these foliage masses. They entirely overlook the orchids, bromeliads, marantas, ferns and palms. The latest hybrids of Mr. Richard Hoffmann of London and some of my own even outrival in gorgeous color the Brazilian kinds. For years the Caladiums have been the greatest attraction of my garden.

There were many other plants on exhibition that strongly appealed to me, particularly palms, cycads, gesnerads, marantas, ferns, and stately tropical foliage plants. In front of the Arizona building stood four handsome specimens of *Dasyilirion longissimum*. All four grow now in my garden but they scarcely made any headway in their size, though perfectly healthy. A fine large plant of *Dasyilirion acrotriche* is one of the features of the garden, being admired even by those who do not care much for plants. It is one of the best scenic plants we can grow. *Dasyilirion serrulatum* is represented by a number of medium-sized plants. All were acquired from collections on exhibition. Fine, large, strikingly beautiful specimens of *Doryanthus Palmeri* and *D. excelsa* in large tubs were scattered around on the lawn in front of the Horticultural Building. They attracted the attention of all plant lovers. Unfortunately soil and climatic conditions of Florida were not then well understood. Many mistakes were made by me, many plants were lost, and these two Australian Torch Lilies were among them. They need a rather moist soil and some shade here. The Japanese had many rare and highly ornamental plants on exhibition though their dwarfed trees in small tubs struck me as an abomination. Among palms a dense specimen of the Bamboo Palm (*Rhapis humilis*), about three feet high and a picture of elegance was particularly admired. It finally found a home in my lath-



FANCY LEAVED CALADIUMS IN THE OPEN
AIR AT PALM COTTAGE GARDENS
GOTHA, FLORIDA



BAMBUSA ARGENTEA VITTATA
A SILVERY BAMBOO 35 FEET HIGH
AND 40 FEET IN DIAMETER

house. Having reached a height of about ten feet by eight feet in diameter it is at present more striking than ever before. Late in October there were many fine plants of *Daphne indica*, of which the Japanese appeared to be especially fond, in full bloom. The perfume exhaled by the flowers was extremely delicious. There were white and pink forms, and one with variegated leaves. Only one small bushy plant on its own roots was established successfully in the deep shade of my lathhouse, the grafted ones all died. This *Daphne* is a jewel and should find a place in all choice collections. Scarcely any other plant in the Japanese exhibit attracted so much attention as the Sacred Bamboo (*Nandina domestica*). Its elegant airy foliage and its dense growth commanded admiration. An additional charm are its bunches of rich scarlet berries in late autumn. This plant belongs to the family Berberidaceae, and its common name is misleading, as it is not even distantly related to the Bamboos.

Many other plants were added to my collection after the exposition closed. I remember some fine specimens of *Araucaria Brasiliensis*, *Dammara robusta*, *Dracaenas* and *Cordylines* and many others. None of them could be coaxed into a vigorous growth on the high and dry pineland soil. Even the New Zealand Flax (*Phormium tenax*), of which I succeeded in later years in growing fine tufts in the moist rich soil of my plant-shed, refused to start. I was unable to spend my vacation in Florida during the World's Fair year, but early in November, 1894, I again enjoyed the balmy breezes of the ideal sunny autumn days in my wildwood garden. Many new plants were added and more land was cleared. A lathhouse was built near the border of the lake for moisture and shade loving plants.

The late Mr. Pliny W. Reasoner, whom we must call the real pioneer of ornamental horticulture in Florida, not only brought together large collections of beautiful tropical and subtropical plants for commercial purposes, but was an excellent plantsman, a good cultivator and an enthusiast. He did more for the promotion of ornamental gardening in Florida than anyone else. He loved plants intensely and he told about his favorites in

glowing language. His writings would fill a good sized volume. Mr. Walter N. Pike, and later Mr. W. C. Steele, worked along the same line and contributed their share in the columns of *The Florida Agriculturist* to make known the possibilities of tropical gardening to the plant loving world.

Among the many branches of study which nature affords for man's pleasure, it is difficult to find one which is at once so full of marvel and beauty, and at the same time so open to the enjoyment of all as that of ornamental horticulture. The pleasures never cease. There is always something new and beautiful to admire. Every new plant that is added is an object of delight and hope. It is always a great pleasure to me to study the gardens and collections of other plant lovers, and many are the discoveries of beautiful things I never had seen before. Even in the early pioneer days beautiful gardens were planted in this part of the state. In his garden at Federal Point the late Mr. E. H. Hart has erected for himself an everlasting monument. Here we find the largest specimens of the Canary Island Date Palm and the Sugar Date Palm (*Phoenix sylvestris*), of the Chinese Fan Palm (*Livistona chinensis*) and the Washingtonias, in the state. The large and very dense specimen of *Podocarpus Nageia*, showing a most singular green with a slight violet cast, is the most exquisite coniferous tree I ever have seen. Small groups of rare tropical *Zamias* and extremely interesting clumps of the Australian *Macrozamia spiralis* proclaim, more than anything else, the intense love and enthusiasm of the one who planted and cared for them. I owe much of my knowledge of plants adapted to our soil and climate to his correspondence.

At Lake Charm near Oveido another scholarly enthusiast, Mr. Theodore L. Mead, started in 1885 a most beautiful tropical garden, well laid out and richly stocked with rare plants. His particular hobby was the cross-breeding of Orchids, and in order to get a good start for his seeds he had erected high up in the Magnolias and Live Oaks little lathhouses which he only could use by the aid of very long ladders. In his rich shady hammock he naturalized tropical ferns, gesnerads,

terrestrial orchids and a host of other beautiful and dainty plants. Most all the plants did well but the constant fight against the ravages of the Florida "razor backs" forced him to discontinue his experiments along these lines. His collection of Palms and Bamboos was the most complete and beautiful in the early nineties of the last century. The most interesting garden of Orlando was at that time the one we now know as "Bishopsted." Many of the rare and tender tropical plants I admired there in November 1894, were later wiped out by the heavy freezes, but enough has been left to show the possibilities of what can be accomplished with a little love and care. There were immense clumps of three species of tender tropical Bamboos from India. The most beautiful in aspect and color was *Bambusa nutans*, the most massive and spreading *B. vulgaris* and the most intricately impenetrable *B. arundinacea*. I have all these in my garden but they are always killed to the ground by a heavy freeze. Only *Bambusa nutans* should be grown in this region on account of its grace and singular bluish-green color. In this garden I found a most exquisite rare palm *Diplothemium caudescens*, about ten or twelve feet high with beautiful feathery leaves eight to ten feet long. The color of the upper side was a deep glossy olive green, while the under side was silvery white. The trunk was only short but very thick. The leaves curved gracefully to all sides. I scarcely ever saw a more elegant and massive Palm. Its picture has never faded from memory. Many have been the attempts to add it to my collection but I always failed. Near it stood a large clump of the Chinese Paper Plant or Aralia (*Tetrapanax papyrifera*), about fifteen feet high and as much in diameter, richly adorned by an abundance of large palmate leaves, silvery-white on their underside, and by the large dense flower panicles. A gigantic *Dahlia imperialis* with single, pure white, bell-shaped flowers also attracted my attention. Fine dense, well-grown specimens of this plant are very ornamental and ought to find a place in every garden. Unfortunately many tropical plants in this garden and the immense clumps of giant Bamboos were killed to the ground by the unprecedented freeze of the

early February days of 1895, and when I again visited the place a year later only the short stumps of the tall culms were left. In my own garden all the strictly tropical plants were a thing of the past, though many had again sprouted from their roots.

In 1893 Prof. C. S. Sargent published his "Notes on the Forest Flora of Japan" in *Garden and Forest*. These articles were a revelation to me. They outlined a new and most important direction in my horticultural work. Side by side with our native evergreens those from Japan form today a most conspicuous feature in my garden. When I came home from Florida, and after I had again read and re-read these "notes" I sent an order for all the plants that were obtainable to Japan, and in May 1895 I received a large consignment of Bamboos, Camellias and other Japanese evergreens. In November I forwarded all of them to Florida and planted them in the positions which they now occupy. I have scarcely lost a single plant except a few specimens of *Michelia compressa*, *Damnacanthus indicus* and *Podocarpus Nageia*. From early in October to Christmas *Camellia Sasanqua* is in full bloom. Some of the specimens are at present ten to twelve feet high and very dense. Their flowers are large, in form like a single Rose and of a fine rosy-red color. The double white form of this species is more spreading in growth and not so tall. This is a gem. Nothing can outvie it in purity and beauty. *Camellia Japonica* was represented in many forms, among them a number of semi-double varieties, the largest and most elegant flowers imaginable. Though Camellias are slow growers some of the bushes have attained a height of eight and nine feet. They begin to bloom early in December. There are early and late varieties. Professor Sargent found the Broad-leaved Holly (*Ilex latifolia*) particularly striking, and he says that it is perhaps the most beautiful of the Japanese evergreen trees, not only on account of its brilliant red abundant fruit, but also on account of its large fine leaves. I received a dozen small specimens, some of them at present eight to ten feet high. It is a slow grower on high pineland. It bears its dense bunches of vivid red berries for the first time this year. *Ilex integra* is also a very beautiful and

distinct species, being, like the former, often cultivated in temple gardens. Its brilliant red berries are very ornamental. My particular favorite among the evergreens of Japan however, is the fine, tall, dense and somewhat columnar *Ternstroemia japonica*, invaluable as a single specimen and in groups, and indispensable in Florida landscape gardening. At present this first-rate hardy shrub is little known, and I have never seen it outside of my own garden. Some of my specimens are at present 15 to 18 feet high. Its flowers appear in June in drooping short racemes, exhaling a very pleasant, though not strong perfume. The berries ripen in September, bursting open and displaying in their mealy flesh brilliant red seeds. Among the plants forming at present very conspicuous objects either as single specimens or in groups, the Star Anise (*Illicium religiosum*) is very prominent. It is also one of the sacred plants of Japan, with fine, large and very aromatic leaves. It never forms a tree here but grows in bush-form, being very broad near the ground and pointed at the top. Coniferous trees were only represented in two species, both *Podocarpi*. My two specimens of *Podocarpus japonica* have made a splendid growth, being dense and upright with narrow myrtle-like leaves, deep glossy green above and silvery-white beneath. The much more beautiful *P. Nageia* did not thrive so well. Only one specimen among a dozen is alive. It grows in dense shade underneath Magnolias and Oaks. Rich moist soil is what it requires.

The Bamboos were well represented in this consignment. No one should plant species with running rhizomes for ornament in Florida. Arundinarias, and all the members of the genus *Phyllostachys* soon become a nuisance and are extremely difficult to eradicate. Only those growing in tufts or clumps should find a place in the garden. A fine large clump of the hardy tufted species is the embodiment of every grace, elegance and beauty imaginable. There were about twenty-five different Bamboos in this collection, which all came under Japanese names. For quite a while I was unable to identify my plants until Mr. A. B. Freeman-Mitford (Lord Redesdale) sent me a complimentary copy of his classic book "The Bamboo Garden"

early in 1897. One of them labelled Taisan-chiku, appealed to me at once as a strong-growing, distinct species. I have now three very large and beautiful clumps of it. It grows over fifty feet tall with thick blackish culms. This proved to be *Dendrocalamus latiflorus*, and is the only hardy large-growing Bamboo. Its native home is Formosa. A fine little specimen, labelled Suo-chiku, was identified as the most elegant *Bambusa Alphonse-Karri*, while the Taiho-chiku proved to be the silver-variegated *B. argentea vittata*, and the Oroshima-chiku the small growing gem *B. gracilis*. I found all the three in large and stately specimens in the gardens of Orlando. Mr. Theodore L. Mead of Lake Charm imported all of them directly from Japan ten years before I had received mine. They have been grown in the Mikado's empire since times immemorial for ornament, but they seem to have been brought there from India. The hardy *Dendrocalamus latiflorus* was not represented in the gardens of Florida before I introduced it.

The members of the Cycas family have always been special favorites of mine. In glasshouses, though of great importance, they neither attain the size, nor the density of growth, nor the luxuriance and beauty they assume when planted out in the open in Florida. *Cycas revoluta* is a common ornament of our gardens. As it is an extremely slow grower I decided to obtain a number of stems in their dry state, ten to forty pounds in weight, directly from Japan. They came with the above mentioned plants, and I sent them immediately to Florida. The largest specimens are now huge plants, pictures of health and beauty, with trunks four to five feet high and with magnificent leaf-crowns. As there are male and female plants in the collection, I am able to gather seeds by the bushel every year.

In the meantime most of the Palm seeds I had received from South Brazil, Argentina and from Haage & Schmidt (Erfurt, Germany) had sprouted. I had hundreds of nice little plants. The most important and beautiful of all Palms for high dry pineland culture are the hardy species of the genus *Cocos*, all natives of southern Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina. All of them are perfectly hardy as far north as Jacksonville.

Usually their foliage is hard and leathery and its color is a beautiful glaucous green. *Cocos Datil* is the largest and most massive of the genus. Its trunk is of an immense size, and its leaves stand in straight perpendicular lines along the stem. The fruit-cluster weighs from 35 to 50 pounds. The fruit, very aromatic, juicy, as large as a plum, is closely packed together on small branches along the stem. *Cocos australis* also ripens four or five bunches of beautiful, edible, sweetly aromatic orange-yellow, juicy fruit each summer. The bunches weigh from 15 to 25 pounds. This is a beautiful silvery-green Palm, with very broad and densely clustered leaves. *C. Blumenavia* is a very distinct Palm in foliage, flowers and fruit. I received the seeds directly from Blumenau, Brazil. My specimen is a strong grower with fine glaucous foliage. The pinnate leaves curve most gracefully and the pinnae are bent downwards at the apex. The flowers appear in dense clusters but they are not creamy-yellow as in the two preceding but violet purple. The fruit clusters weigh about 15 pounds. The fruit has no perfume and has a very distinct color—white with a small red point and a rosy-red color around the stem. *C. eriospatha* is my especial favorite among the hardy *Cocos* species. Its beautiful recurved leaves are usually 6 to 7 feet long, glaucous, faintly suffused with dark green and the leaf-stems show a deep purplish violet tint. The flower spathe distinguishes it from all its congeners. This is covered with a dense soft felt-like wool of a beautiful chestnut-brown color. The fruit is as large as a good-sized cherry, yellowish-green in color, covered with innumerable gray dots, very juicy, not aromatic and of a most delicious plum-like taste. I have also fine bearing specimens of *C. Yatay*, *C. odorata* and *C. Gaertnerii*. The last named species is the most prolific of all, bearing each year usually ten to twelve clusters of highly perfumed creamy yellow fruit, the size of a big cherry, each cluster weighing from 20 to 25 pounds. *C. × Bonnetii* was introduced by Haage & Schmidt. This firm received their seeds from M. Bonnet in the Riviera. The fruits vary a good deal in the different specimens, some being quite small and only a few in a cluster,

others are as large as a cherry and densely packed in the bunch. I have about a dozen specimens of this hybrid. The importance of these Palms and their great economic value is as yet little understood in Florida. Their fruit can be used for preserves, it supplies a good jelly and an excellent wine, or by distillation a highly aromatic liquor. Chickens, turkeys and guineas are exceedingly fond of the fruit, and the oily seeds form an excellent feed for hogs. Their main importance from the standpoint of the plant lover lies in their great beauty and symmetry, their hardiness and easy cultivation. They look best planted in groups of a dozen or more specimens. Not adapted for low moist lands. I have several other distinct species of hardy glaucous-leaved Coconut Palms, beautiful and very ornamental, but not yet determined.

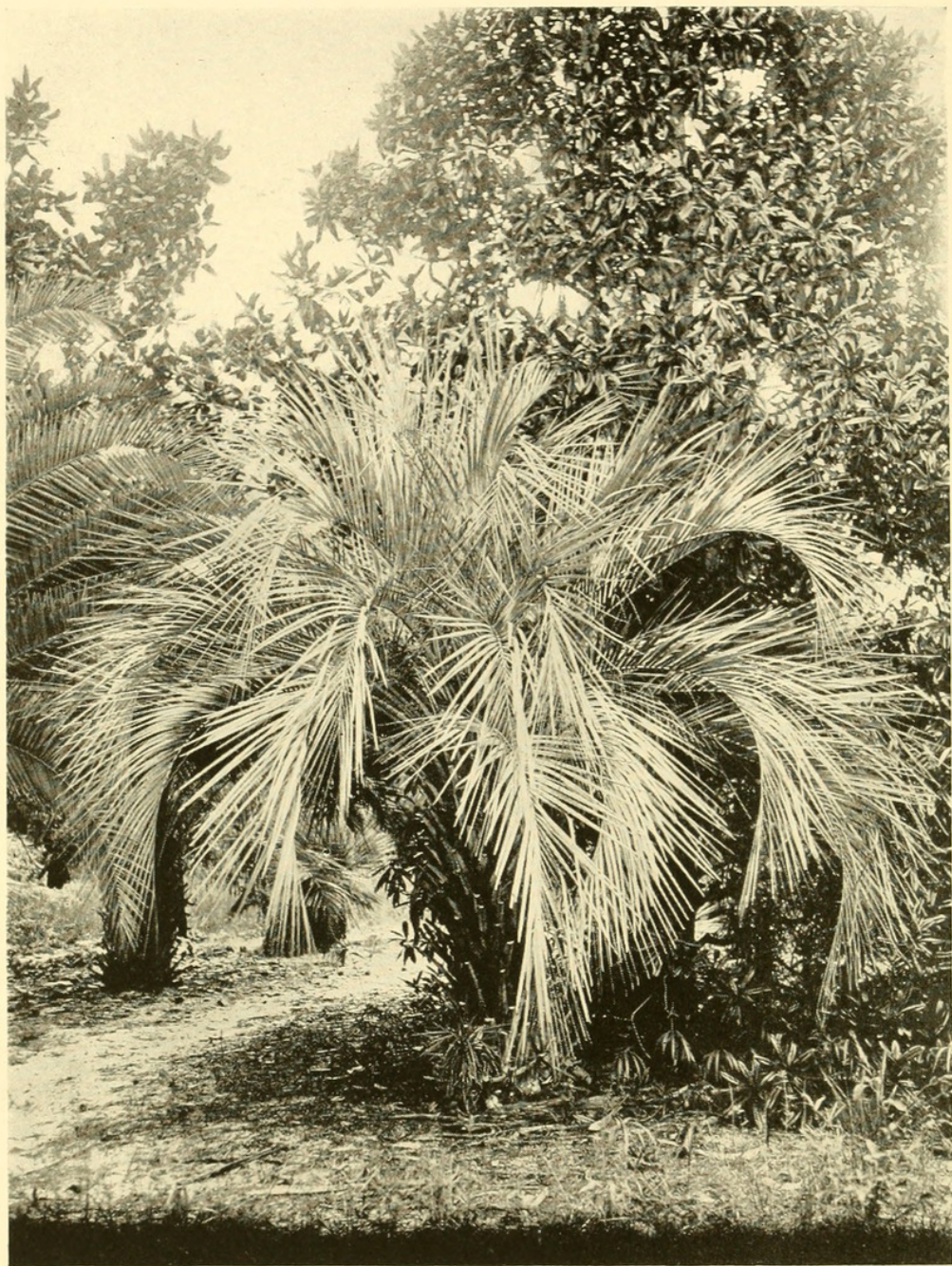
Cocos plumosa, *C. flexuosa*, *C. Romanzoffiana*, *C. coronata*, and the true *C. australis*, all with long feathery, soft, green leaves were planted at the same time, but they are very tender particularly when young. All my plants were killed in the first winter. In later years success crowned my experiments, and I now can point with much satisfaction to a fine *Cocos plumosa* which is thirty-five feet high, though only ten years old. It bears a magnificent crown of leaves with densely-set pinnae which reminds of gigantic ostrich-plumes. *C. flexuosa* has attained fifteen feet in twelve years. All these Coconut Palms are extremely elegant and beautiful, and all are hardy in ordinary winters as far north as Sanford. Young plants must be protected during cold weather.

The *Phoenix* or Date Palm seeds all came from Haage & Schmidt, who obtained their supply from the Riviera. Their nomenclature is in a deplorable condition, and many hybrids came from the same lot of seeds. I planted an avenue of Canary Island Date Palms running from the house to the lake. The plants made a good growth, but scarcely one of them is true to name. They are all hybrids of *Phoenix Canariensis* fertilized with the pollen of *P. sylvestris* and *P. dactylifera*. It was necessary to order the seeds from the Canary Islands directly, and I have now a number of young plants

which show their true nature. The Canary Island Date Palm does not do very well on high pineland, where the Indian Sugar Date Palm (*P. sylvestris*), the elegant *P. rupicola*, the drooping-leaved *P. reclinata* and the sharp-spined *P. spinosa* thrive so well. It is one of the most magnificent Palms in cultivation. Massive specimens of it can be found in all the best gardens of Orlando, Winter Park and Sanford and as far north as Jacksonville. On the south and north sides of the courthouse at Orlando four small plants were set out, one on each side of the walk, about fifteen years ago—at present four immense massive and most beautiful specimens. Their trunks are about twelve feet high and each as thick as a water barrel. They begin to flower early in winter and the great clusters of orange-yellow fruits ripen in April and May. On rich moist hammock and flatwood soil this Palm is a fast grower and attains an immense size. The leaf stems have a decidedly yellowish tint, while the color of the big feathery leaves is a bright green. I have two very fine specimens of *P. sylvestris*. It grows well in my garden, and its massiveness strongly reminds me of *P. Canariensis*. The leaves are over ten feet long and of a fine glaucous-green color. It is a very beautiful and distinct tall growing Palm and excellent for large groups and for avenue planting. *P. zeylanica* grows in tufts, producing numerous suckers around the lower part of the trunk. These must be removed as soon as they appear if a specimen with a single stem is desired. There are a few single stemmed specimens in the Laughlin place at Zellwood which are pictures of elegance and beauty. The color of the foliage is almost as blue as that of the Colorado Blue Spruce. In my garden *P. reclinata* and *P. spinosa* look very much alike at some distance, but a close examination reveals the fact that they are very distinct. Both form immense tufts if the numerous suckers are allowed to grow. Both have reclining leaves. The leaves of *Phoenix reclinata*, however, are soft in texture and the leaflets along the midrib are not sharp at their apex. In tall specimens the trunk is very slender and so small in diameter that we wonder how it can carry the dense leaf-crown without breaking. In *P.*



COCOS PLUMOSA A SPECIMEN
PALM ONLY TEN YEARS OLD



COCOS AUSTRALIS IN FOREGROUND.
BEHIND A TREE OF MAGNOLIA
GRANDIFLORA

spinosa the trunk is always much thicker and much rougher. The leaves are very hard to the touch and each leaflet ends in a very sharp spine. This species and several others, like *P. acaulis* and *P. padulosa*, all having sharp-spined pinnae, should not be planted near walks, as they are liable to inflict painful wounds. One of the most refined and elegant of all the Date Palms is *P. rupicola* from the Sikkim Himalayas. One of the specimens of this Palm is a feature in my garden, being about 15 feet high, with a trunk 8 feet high and with beautiful glossy green leaves each 10 to 12 feet long. Smaller specimens are extremely ornamental as pot plants, if the suckers are removed. No other species has such delightfully soft green glossy leaves, reminding one, especially in small specimens, of some species of *Cycas*. The daintiest of all the *Phoenix* species is *P. Roebelenii*, which is represented in several Florida gardens. It does not thrive in high pineland, but is most successfully grown in lath houses and in the moist soil of rich hammock lands in half-shady places. It excels most other small Palms in grace, elegance and beauty. In the old Abbot garden at Orlando there is a fine specimen about 5 feet high, a picture of loveliness, all its leaves being densely arranged around the slender stem and all recurving elegantly to all sides. On account of this trait it is popularly known as the Fountain Palm.

I have always been a great admirer of our native Cabbage Palmetto (*Sabal Palmetto*), and many were the attempts to carry it to my garden. I usually failed, and the fine, though as yet small, specimens, were all raised from seeds and were grown until large enough for transplanting, in pots in my glass-house in Milwaukee. I gathered the small black shiny seeds as large as a pea, when rambling around in the woods, and received seeds of other *Sabals* from Bermuda, Cuba, Jamaica, Trinidad, Mexico, and southeastern Texas. As the genus *Sabal* and its different species are not well understood I have been anxious to add all the different kinds of which I could obtain seeds to my collection. As it would lead too far to consider here all the species I grew I shall only mention the most important. All of them grow well on high pineland, but

in order to insure a rapid growth frequent applications of fertilizers, rich in ammonia, are necessary. A most important point in their cultivation is to plant them in very rich soil. A deep hole must be dug, and this must be filled with very rich soil, preferably old cow manure. If carefully planted and watered the growth will be very luxuriant from the beginning. I have several fine specimens of *Sabal texana* (*S. mexicana*). It reminds one much of our native Cabbage Palmetto, but the leaf-stalks are longer and the color of the leaves is more bluish-green. It is altogether a more graceful plant with more slender stems and a quicker grower. Prof. O. F. Cook, our American Palm specialist, discovered not long ago a very fine and highly ornamental new species in a garden of Victoria, Texas. He had the kindness to send me several fine seedlings. This is *S. exul*. I also have a promising specimen of the Porto Rican *S. causiarrum*, used so extensively in its native home in the manufacture of hats. It is a beautiful Palm and perfectly hardy here as are all the Sabals. *S. Blackburniana* is represented in my garden by several fine specimens. The large fan-leaves are carried on long petioles. It is a rapid grower if well fertilized, and its leaf-crown attains an immense size. My plants were raised from seeds received from Bermuda. A still more impressive, distinct and very massive species in my garden is *S. umbraculifera*. Many years ago Sir Daniel Morris published a very interesting article about this species in *The Gardener's Chronicle*. This fascinating description of the forests of these Palms in the savannahs of Jamaica created in me the desire to add it to my collection, and Mr. W. Fawcett, Director of Public Gardens and Plantations of Jamaica, was kind enough to send me seeds. The leaves of this species are very large, hard to the touch, not so much plaited as in other species and carried on comparatively short petioles. Nevertheless the crown is immense. Even the inexperienced observer is attracted by its distinctive and massive appearance. I have quite a number of other Sabals which I received as *S. princeps*, *S. Havanensis*, *S. mauritiaeforme*, all apparently very distinct, though all of the Sabals show much family likeness. It must be

said here that I have nowhere else in Florida seen the different species of *Sabal* except in my own garden. Most all of them show their characteristics only when they have acquired a rather large size. All of the *Sabals* retain their old leaf-stalks close to the trunk for many years. They impart character and massiveness to these fine Palms. These leaf-stems, usually called "boot-jacks" by the old inhabitants, should never be removed until they rot away naturally. It is a mistake and a sin against good taste and common sense to scrape them off in order to get a smooth surface. Unfortunately this is done in many gardens, and thus the characteristic beauty of the *Sabals* is destroyed. Of course old dead leaves must be cut off close to the trunk but a remnant of the clasping end part should be left intact. These leaf stems gather humus in their pockets in which the spores of the Golden Polypody find a foothold. In their native wilds most all of the Cabbage Palmettoes bear wreaths of these fine large Ferns just underneath their crown. Several trunks of *Sabals*, many of the hardy Cocoanut Palms in my garden are adorned with dense masses of various Ferns. *Polypodium fraxinifolium*, *P. Phymotades*, *P. nigrescens*, *Niphobolus lingua*, a number of *Davalias* and many other tropical epiphytic Ferns add a charm to these rough Palm trunks that must be seen to form a correct idea of this beautiful combination. The Boston Fern (*Nephrolepis exaltata*), the Sword Fern (*N. biserrata*) and the *N. tuberosa* soon cover the entire Palm trunk with a dense mantle of green. This decoration would not be possible if the trunks had smooth surfaces. Only the other day I came across a massive Cabbage Palmetto in a shady hammock whose stem was completely covered with dense dark-green pendent masses of the Grass-Fern (*Vittaria lineata*), and a lovelier picture was scarcely imaginable. In the woods I have sometimes found the Carolina Jessamine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*), the Moonflower (*Ipomoea Bona-nox*) and the Foam Climber (*Decumaria barbara*) covering the tops of these Palmettos, and when these climbers are in full bloom, the sight is most enchanting. The Carolina Aster (*Aster carolinianus*) often clambers over the trunks and decorates them with a most beautiful violet-blue.

The Washingtonias cannot be successfully grown on high pineland. I planted dozens of seedlings of *Washingtonia filifera*, *W. robusta* and *W. Sonorae*, fine robust specimens, but all pined away. In localities where the clay subsoil is near the surface, in hammock and flatwood soil they are the most rapid growers of all our garden Palms. In such soils they soon form fine objects all over the state from Jacksonville to Miami. No other species, not even the glorious Royal Palm, has found so much favor with the real estate men in south Florida as *W. robusta*, and none is so much used for avenue planting. It is a peculiar coincidence that these Washingtonias, known to grow in their native haunts, in California and Sonora, only in very dry regions, should refuse to grow in Florida in dry soil, while they thrive admirably in moist, even mucky localities. The two Erytheas (*Erythea armata* and *E. edulis*), which naturally also grow in the dry regions of California and adjacent localities and which form such wonderful ornaments of the gardens of California, will neither grow in moist nor dry soil in Florida. I have planted several dozen at various times but none ever started into growth.

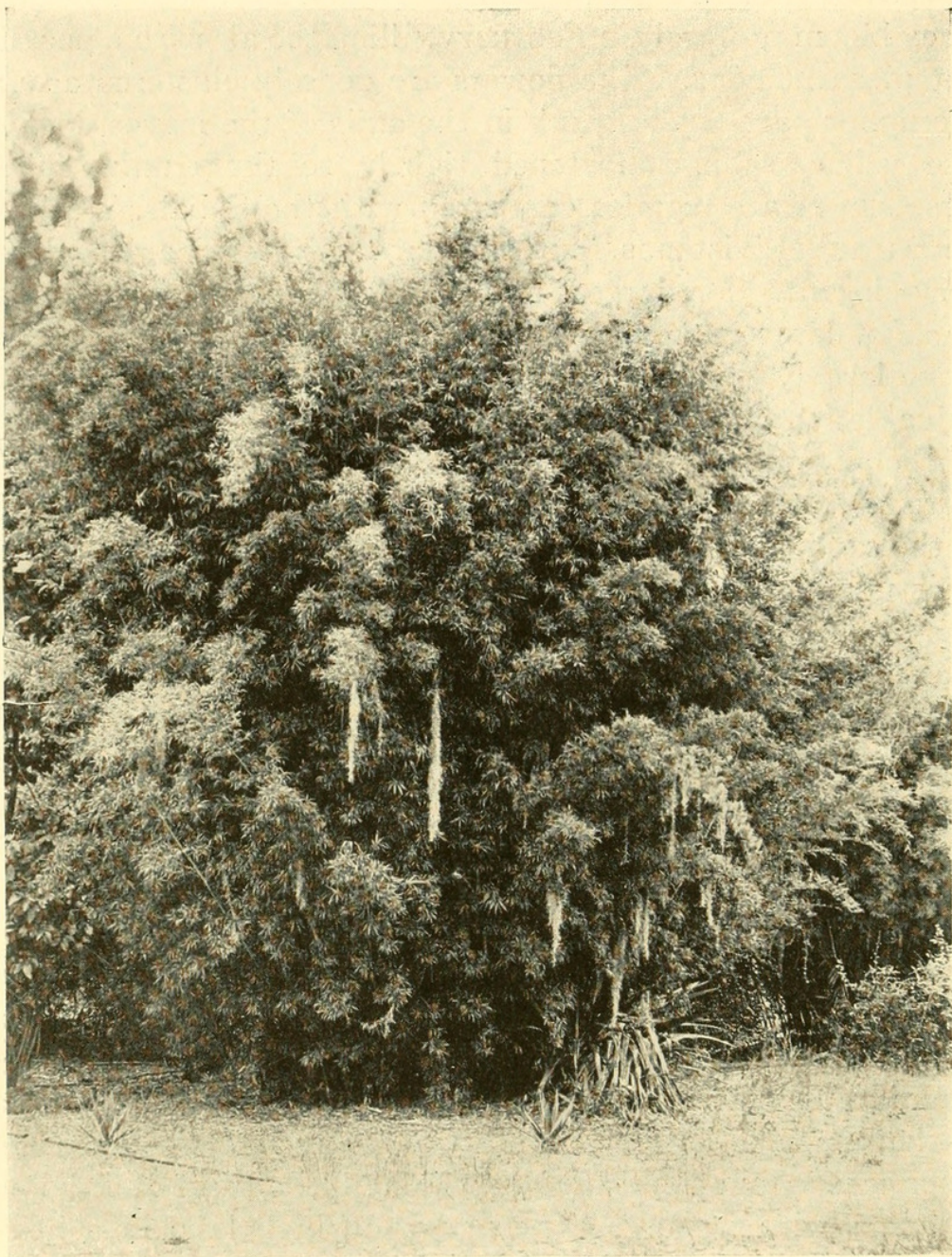
Among the Livistonas the Chinese Fan Palm (*Livistona Chinensis*) is the most important for central Florida, and thence southward. In the fall of 1896 I set out quite a number of three and four year old seedlings. All soon died. I repeated the experiment and added *L. australis*, *L. humilis*, *L. Mariae*. The result was the same. All these fine fan-leaved species require rich moist soil and shade while young. There are tall specimens of *L. Chinensis* in the late Mr. E. H. Hart's garden at Federal Point, and many young specimens at Sanford, Orlando and many other places. These Palms look particularly beautiful in irregular groups, consisting of a dozen and more specimens.

The European Fan Palm (*Chamaerops humilis*) and its quite distinct varieties are perfectly adapted to our high pineland gardens. They grow in tufts or clusters forming most elegant specimens in the course of time. I received seeds of about four distinct varieties from Haage & Schmidt in 1893 and my

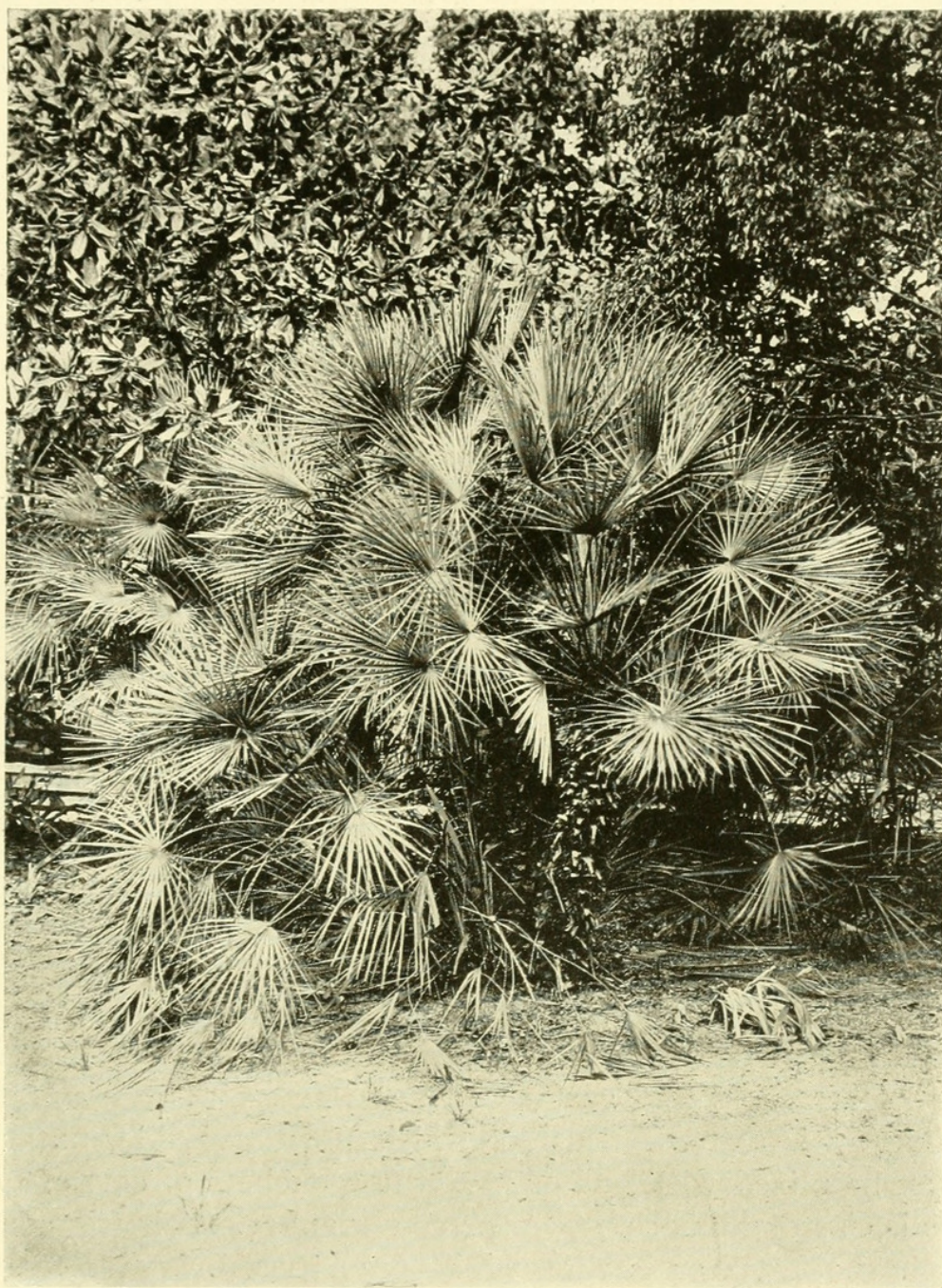
seedlings were set out in 1896. Two of them, *C. humilis* and *C. macrocarpa*, have at present main stems 6 and 7 feet high. They bloom profusely in February, filling the air with a peculiar but pleasant odor. The flowers are densely clustered around the upper part of the trunk in the axils of the leaves, looking like yellow sponges fastened tightly to the trunk. These *Chamaerops* are pigmies compared with the Sabals, Washingtonias and Livistonas, but they are extremely graceful and very elegant. My largest two specimens form the foreground of a few large magnolias. The European Fan Palm deserves to be largely planted in high and low lands. It is especially valuable for small gardens.

The most elegant Chinese Windmill Palm (*Trachycarpus excelsus*), one of the hardiest of all Palms, has not been successful in the sandy soil of Florida. I have a very fine specimen near my study growing among *Camellia Sasanqua*, Hollies and other shrubs. It is about 8 feet high and its trunk is constantly shaded from the sun. It is a most beautiful specimen. I raised it from seed in 1897 and planted it out in 1900. An abundant supply of water, shade and a fertilizer rich in ammonia, is what it requires. This is a fine Palm for the Tallahassee and other regions in northern Florida where the soil consists mostly of clay.

One of the most distinct and stately Palms, and hardy as far north as Federal Point in well protected localities, is *Acrocomia Totai*, a native of Paraguay. Mr. Theodore L. Mead introduced it about thirty-five years ago. There are at present magnificent specimens in many gardens. Near the railroad station at Lake Alfred in Polk Co., there are two fine young specimens, about ten feet high, which fill the heart of any lover of Palms with rapture. They grow on high land in a heavy red clay soil. It does not do well in the elevated sand hills except special care is taken before planting to dig a large hole and fill this partly with clay, partly with old cow manure. I had two fine specimens near my house but lost both in 1907 after I had transplanted them to a more favorable position. Not only the trunk of this species but also the leaf stems are provided



ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL
BAMBOOS IN FLORIDA
BAMBUSA ALPHONSE KARRI



EUROPEAN FAN PALM
CHAMAEROPS HUMILIS

with a dense armor of formidable spines. It is a most beautiful and elegant Palm, almost as graceful as *Cocos plumosa*, but of a deeper green. It looks best in groups of a dozen or more specimens and it should be planted largely where soil and climate favor its growth.

Jubaea spectabilis, the Coquito or Monkey Coconut of Chili, an exceedingly massive and, in its young state, beautiful Palm, was also planted. I had raised several good young plants from seeds. All grew, but only one of them formed a small healthy looking specimen. While my *Cocos Datil*, planted out at the same time, has assumed imposing proportions the *Jubaea* is only $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet high. In California this species ranks among the most massive and beautiful of all garden Palms. As it is very hardy it undoubtedly can be successfully grown in the clay soil of northwestern Florida.

In order to succeed with Palms and the other vigorous growing plants on high pineland a good deal of care is necessary before planting. The soil must be thoroughly worked and fertilized and the plants set out must be watered, shaded and mulched. I have found the following way the best for Palms, especially for the strong growing species, such as Sabals, Washingtonias, Livistonas, Acrocomias, Date Palms and Coconut species: Put stakes in the places where the plants will find a permanent position. Then dig a hole from five to six feet deep and as wide. Fill this up to two-thirds with stable manure, clay, bones, old tin cans, rotten wood, leaves and grass and other rubbish and finally fill the upper one-third with leaf mould and surface soil. After six months another filling up is needed. Surface soil is now advisable, but this must be mixed with one or two water buckets of cotton seed meal, Castor pumace, sheep or cow manure. Stir frequently until the fertilizer is thoroughly decomposed. After five or six weeks have elapsed the soil will be in the condition to receive the plant. Select good, thrifty young specimens from 5 to 6 inch pots and about two to three feet high. Plant in such a way that a saucer-like depression is formed, water thoroughly and mulch with old leaves, weeds, pine needles, stable manure



COCOS ERIOSPATHA

or rotten wood. Always set out your plants in the rainy season, —or preferably, in November and December—never in the dry season. About eight years ago I transplanted a number of small seedling Cabbage Palmettos. For one specimen I dug a large hole and filled this partly with night soil. All the others were planted in rather small holes and no manure was used, but they received strong applications of commercial fertilizer after they had been set out. The difference in growth is most remarkable. The specimen treated in the proper way is at present a large massive and very beautiful plant and at least ten times larger than most of the others.

The species of the genus *Cocos*, particularly all those with glaucous foliage, have a rather shallow root-system and the holes prepared for them need not be quite so deep. Bamboos are easily planted and cared for. It is not necessary to dig large holes for their reception, but the soil should be good and rich. They should be provided with a mulch of stable manure after they have been set out, and they are very grateful for a few applications of good commercial fertilizer each year. All my plants, Palms and Bamboos included, were only fertilized during the first three or four years after they had been set out. They subsist now entirely on the old leaves and rotten wood that accumulates around them, which at present consists of a heavy layer several inches thick. No leaves, old wood and weeds are burned—everything is used as a mulch for my large specimen plants. The formerly dry, poor, white sand has been transformed into a fine rich hammock soil. All the old Palm leaves which are cut off are thrown on the compost heap and after thoroughly decomposed are used as a mulch. Chickens, guineas and turkeys do the cultivating and keep the soil free from the injurious insects. All the dish water, wash-water, everything that contains plant food, is used for the plants near the house. There is no doubt that all my Palms and other plants would have grown much more rapidly if they could have been supplied with good applications of commercial fertilizer, but this was out of the question.

(To be continued)



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