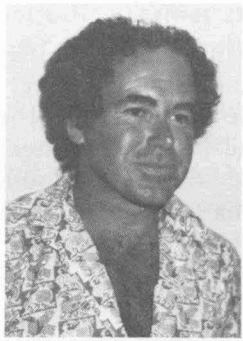


# THE UNCOMMON PALM

by Lee Horton



Lee Horton

To most people, palm trees and the tropics are synonymous. This is understandable, for the great family of the palms, whose species are almost legion, is almost exclusively tropical.

With a few species growing in temperate latitudes, it is little wonder that palms are strangers to many of us.

Here in Southern California, the variety of Palms that can be grown outside is much greater than even an experienced gardner would imagine. We have over thirty genus (families of palms, of which there are many individual species) of palms growing in our gardens. A friend of mine here in Vista has eighty-eight genus of palms growing outside in his garden.

So it can be seen that palms can play a far more important part in todays gardens.

Many cold hardy palms (*Trachycarpus*, *Buitia*, *Sabal* and others) can grow as far north as Washington D.C.

In California, Florida, and many Southern States, we are very fortunate to find a great variety of palms to choose from. You can have anything from a one foot to a two hundred foot trunk, single trunk or multiple trunked. You may also have variance of color from silver, blue, grey and many shades of green. Fronds of many shapes and textures are very interesting. It is no wonder than that with this variety, tropical birds and palms go so well together.

The palm has always been very useful to man; for building materials and products such as wine, oil, sugar, wax, milk and fruit.

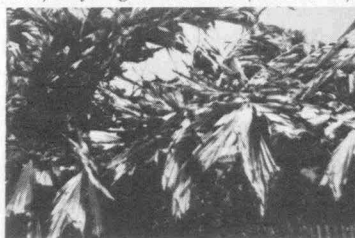
Since this column deals with plants and their use and attraction for birds, I would like to give a few examples in regards to palms. In our gardens, the birds are attracted to the flowers and fruits of the various palms. Palms are used also for their homes. We have a *Washingtonia Robusta* with a full skirt that stands about fifty feet tall. The skirt is made up of the old fronds that now cover the trunk. Many different varieties of birds have chosen this plant for their nesting site, e.g. Barn Owls, Tanangers, Black Birds, House Sparrows and other Western natives. All living in the same tree harmoniously.

Many of us are familiar with the palm fronds being used as nesting material for the birds in our aviaries. Growing palms in your own garden gives you a constant source of material for this purpose.

Californians in particular should not be satisfied



View of Mr. Horton's garden showing *Phoenix Roebelenii* (Pigmy Date Palm) in foreground. *Aloe* (Tree Aloe) from Africa in center.



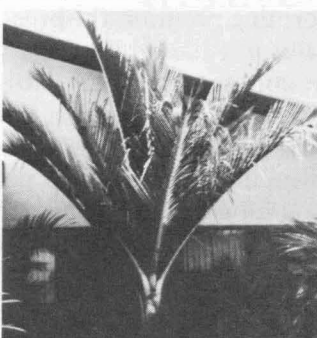
Closeup of *Caryota Urens* (Fishtail Palm).



Full grown *Caryota Urens*.



*Erythea Edulis*, slow growing palm from Guadalupe Island



*Rhopalostylis Sapida*, very dramatic. *Howea Forsteriana* (Kentia Palm) known as the Shaving Brush Palm. from Lord Howe Island.



with just the four common nursery palms (*Washingtonia*, *Phoenix Date*, *King or Queen palm*). With a little effort one should be able to find more exotic and satisfying palms to beautify your garden.

Those interested in joining the Palm Society and receiving its journal should write to 1320 S. Venetian Way, Miami, Florida 33139, for information ■