

Itaya Revisited

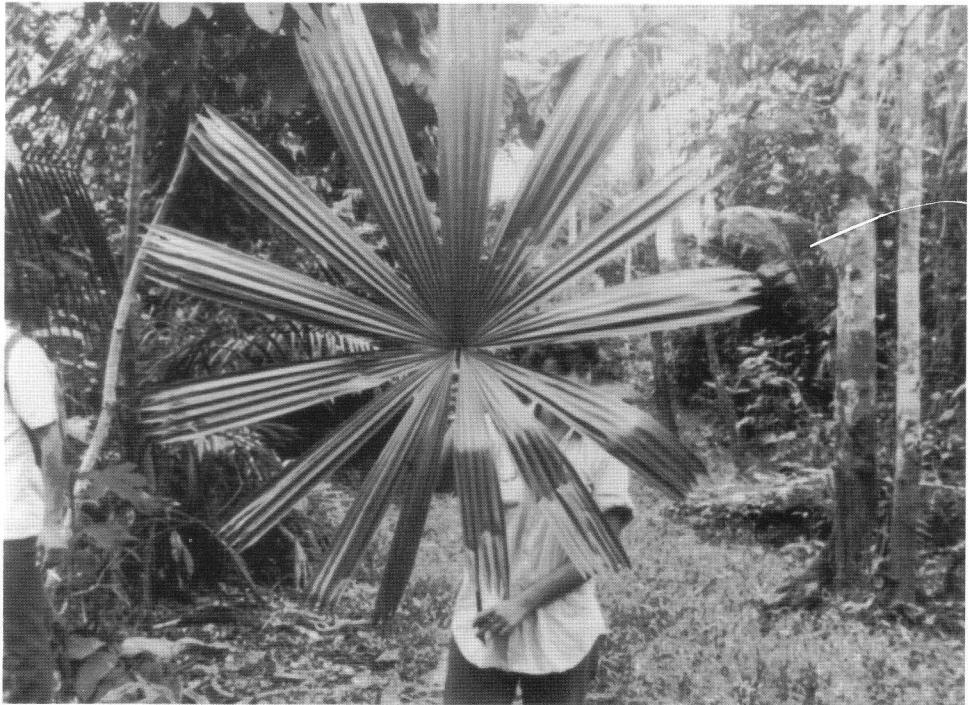
ANDREW HENDERSON

New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, New York, NY 10458

From April to June 1960 Harold Moore collected palms in Peru. On 13 May he travelled by boat from Iquitos up the Río Itaya to a place called Varadero de Omaguas. Here there is a short overland trail which connects the Itaya to the Río Amazonas. While crossing this trail Moore found a small, fan-leaved, coryphoid palm. Although the palm was not flowering he thought it belonged to the genus *Chelyocarpus*. Local people occasionally used the leaves of the palm for thatching, and called it "falso bombonaje" (bombonaje is the name usually given to the Panama hat

plant, *Carludovica palmata*, in the Cyclanthaceae). Later, when Moore was back in Cornell and writing his report on the trip, he called the coryphoid palm from the Río Itaya *Chelyocarpus wallisii*.

Moore returned to the Río Itaya twice, on 5 March 1967 and 20 December 1974. On the 1967 trip he found the "falso bombonaje" in flower. Moore realized that it could not be a *Chelyocarpus*. The sepals and petals were connate and there were numerous stamens and a single carpel. Furthermore, the petiole was split near the base. None of these characters usually



1. Leaf of *Itaya amicornum* from Santa Maria del Ojeal.



2. Inflorescence of *Itaya amicornum*. Note split petiole at bottom left of picture.

occurred in *Chelyocarpus*, and in 1972 Moore described the palm as a new genus, *Itaya*, and called the species *I. amicornum*.

For several years thereafter *Itaya amicornum* was only known from the type locality. In a 1977 paper on the conservation status of palms Moore wrote the following of *I. amicornum*, "... the species is still known from fewer than 100 individuals in what constitutes, essentially, a single population adjacent to a clearing." Fortunately we now know that the range of *Itaya* is much wider than Moore supposed. In 1973 the species was collected on the Brazilian side of the Río Yavari, approximately 200 km east of the type locality. This river forms the frontier between Peru and Brazil.

In January 1988 I visited Iquitos. The original population of palms still grows on the Río Itaya, and seems to be reproducing and more or less intact. However, the for-

est in the area is being destroyed. Juan Ruiz, a botanist from the Herbario Amazonense in Iquitos, also showed me a second population at Santa Maria del Ojeal on the Río Sinchicuy, a small tributary of the Amazonas, and about 70 km northeast of the type locality (Fig. 1).

Itaya amicornum is probably relatively common in a restricted region of eastern Peru. It is similar to, and confused with, *Chelyocarpus*. There are at least two species of *Chelyocarpus* in the Iquitos region, but the two genera can easily be distinguished in the field by the petiole. In *Itaya*, the petiole and sheath are split near the base (Fig. 2), while in *Chelyocarpus* they are not. This is the same vegetative character which distinguishes *Thrinax* from *Coccothrinax*.

As far as I know *Itaya* is not in cultivation. Quite a number of seeds were apparently taken to Iquitos recently and

planted, but failed to germinate. The habitat of the palm is tall lowland rainforest below 300 m elevation. Rainfall is over 2,500 mm per year, and there are year round high temperatures. The palm seems

to grow in poorly drained acidic soils, often near streams. It is to be hoped that this interesting and attractive palm can be brought into cultivation.

Principes, 32(3), 1988, pp. 131-132

BOOKSTORE

- A GUIDE TO THE MONOCOTYLEDONS OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA, PART 3, PALMAE** (R. J. Johns and A. J. M. Hay, Eds., 1984, 124 pp.) \$8.00
- A MANUAL OF THE RATTANS OF THE MALAY PENINSULA** (J. Dransfield, 1979, 270 pp.) 25.00
- COCONUT PALM FROND WEAVING** (Wm. H. Goodloe, 1972, 132 pp.) 3.95
- COCONUT RESEARCH INSTITUTE, MANADO** (P. A. Davis, H. Sudasrip, and S. M. Darwis, 1985, 165 pp., 79 pp. color) 35.00
- CULTIVATED PALMS OF VENEZUELA** (A. Braun, 1970, 94 pp. and 95 photographs.) 6.00
- EXOTICA (4)** (A. Graf, pictorial encyclopedia, 2 vols., including 250 plant families, 16,600 illust., 405 in color, 2590 pp.) 187.00
- FLORA OF PANAMA (Palms)** (R. E. Woodson, Jr., R. W. Schery, 1943, 122 pp.) 17.00
- FLORA OF PERU (Palms)** (J. F. MacBride, 1960, 97 pp.) 8.00
- FLORIDA PALMS**, Handbook of (B. McGeachy, 1955, 62 pp.) 1.95
- *FLORIDA TREES AND PALMS** (L. and B. Maxwell, 30 palm species, 120 pp.) 6.00
- HARVEST OF THE PALM** (J. J. Fox, 1977, 244 pp.) 22.50
- INDEX TO PRINCIPES** (Vols. 1-20, 1956-1976, H. E. Moore, Jr., 68 pp.) 3.00
- MAJOR TRENDS OF EVOLUTION IN PALMS** (H. E. Moore, Jr., N. W. Uhl, 1982, 69 pp.) 6.00
- OIL PALMS AND OTHER OILSEEDS OF THE AMAZON** (C. Pesce, 1941, translated and edited by D. Johnson, 1985, 199 pp.) 24.95
- *PALMAS DEL DEPARTAMENTO DE ANTIOQUIA** (Palms of Colombia, in Spanish; G. Galearno and R. Bernal, 1987, 207 pp.) 18.95
- PALMAS PARA INTERIORES, PARQUES Y AVENIDAS** (in Spanish, A. Braun, 1983, 83 pp., 39 pp. color) 8.95
- PALMAS TROPICALES: CULTIVADAS EN VENEZUELA** (in Spanish, J. Hoyas F. and A. Braun, 1984, all in color, 134 pp.) 50.00
- PALEM INDONESIA** (in Indonesian) (Sas-traprdja, Moge, Sangat, Afriastini, 1978. 52 illustrations, 120 pp. For English translation add \$2.00) 5.50
- PALMS** (A. Blombery & T. Rodd, 1982, 192 pp., 212 colored photographs) 30.00
- PALMS IN AUSTRALIA** (David Jones, 1984, 278 pp., over 200 color photographs) 30.00
- PALMS IN COLOUR** (David Jones, 1985, 93 pp.) 8.95
- PALMS OF THE LESSER ANTILLES** (R. W. Read, 1979, 48 pp.) 8.00
- PALMS FOR THE HOME AND GARDEN** (L. Stewart, 1981, 72 pp., some color) 10.95
- PALMS OF MALAYA** (T. C. Whitmore, 1973, 132 pp.) 31.00
- PALMS OF SOUTH FLORIDA** (G. B. Stevenson, 1974, 251 pp.) 7.95
- PALM SAGO** (K. Ruddle, D. Johnson, P. K. Townsend, J. D. Rees, 1978, 190 pp.) 10.00
- PALMS OF SUBEQUATORIAL QUEENSLAND** (Robert Tucker, 1988, 91 pp.) 20.00
- *REVISIONS OF THE PALM GENUS SYAGRUS MART. AND OTHER SELECTED GENERA IN THE COCOS ALLIANCE** (S. Glassman, 1987, 222 pp.) 19.95
- SECRET OF THE ORIENT DWARF RHAPHIS EXCELSA** (L. McKamey, 1983, 51 pp.) 3.95
- THE GENUS PTYCHOSPERMA LABILL.** (F. B. Essig, 1978, 61 pp.) 6.50
- THE INDIGENOUS PALMS OF NEW CALEDONIA** (H. E. Moore, Jr., N. W. Uhl, 1984, 88 pp.) 12.00
- TROPICA** (A. Graf, 7000 color photos, 1138 pp.) 125.00

* New Arrival