

Principes, 34(1), 1990, p. 50

Chamaedorea stolonifera

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In 1975 I became very interested in palms, especially the genus *Chamaedorea*; since then I have always looked for different species of *Chamaedorea*. A few years ago Lois Rossten let me have a female plant of *Chamaedorea stolonifera*. What a beautiful palm it is (Fig. 1)! I feel very few palms can compare with it.

For the next couple of years I hybridized *Chamaedorea stolonifera* with pollen from my plant of *C. ernesti-augustii*. The main reason for hybridizing this plant was that there were no male plants of *Chamaedorea stolonifera* available for pollen. The hybrid is beautiful, but does not throw out stolons.

I was very fortunate when I located a male plant of *C. stolonifera* in Dick Palmer's garden, possibly the only one in cultivation. In 1983 I received a small amount of pollen. I was doubtful if I could set any seed with such a small amount, but luck was with me and twelve fruits developed.

Next I wondered if they were going to be hybrid. However, fruits developed in the normal time, about six–twelve months, whereas hybridized fruits stay on the plant for up to two years.

After four months the seeds started to germinate. Out of the twelve seeds, I grew six seedlings (50% to 60% is normal germination for me). Between 1984 and 1987 I had been able to grow six additional plants from seed, again using pollen from Palmer's male plant, bringing the total number of seedlings to twelve.



1. *Chamaedorea stolonifera*, pistillate plant. Photo by L. Hooper.

After two years the seedlings started putting out stolons. After four years they started to flower. It looks like five of the plants will flower this year (1989). The first one was female and the second one was male (hooray!).

I hope that in the next few years, with the possibility of a larger amount of pollen, I can set more seed and distribute this beautiful palm to interested members.