

PALM BRIEFS

A New Species of *Ptychosperma* (Palmae)

During field work in New Guinea in 1971-72, I sent seeds of an apparent new species of *Ptychosperma* to the seed bank of The Palm Society, and to several tropical gardens. With the recent completion of a revision of this genus, I have confirmed that the seeds (numbered *Essig LAE 55066*) do represent a new species. I am naming the species for Professor Harold E. Moore, Jr. of Cornell University, despite his modest protestations. As my doctoral thesis adviser, Professor Moore provided invaluable assistance throughout my studies. His other contributions to the study of palms and as editor of *Principes* need no description here.

Ptychosperma mooreanum belongs to the subgenus *Ptychosperma*, as does the familiar *P. elegans*. Thus it has a solitary stem and ruminant endosperm in the seed. It is distinctive, however, in that the flowers are deep purple and the ripe fruit are black-purple on a golden-orange panicle. This is the only black-purple-fruited species in this subgenus, though *P. waitianum*, *P. schefferi* and several others in the subgenus *Actinophloeus* also have this color of fruit. Overall, the plant is smaller and more delicate than *Ptychosperma elegans*.

A more elaborate description will appear later with a complete revision of the genus *Ptychosperma*. The following Latin description will serve to validate the name of the new species for the benefit of horticulturists and researchers already using the plant.

***Ptychosperma mooreanum* F. B.**
Essig sp. nov.

Caulis solitarius, ca. 2-4 cm. in diam.; folia regulariter vel irregulariter pinnata, pinnis anguste cuneatis vel in parte



1. *Ptychosperma mooreanum* on Normanby Island, Milne Bay District, Papua New Guinea (*Essig LAE 55066*).

distali angustatis; inflorescentia multiramosa, gracilis, aurantescens; flores purpurei; fructus atropurpureus, globosus, 9-12 mm. in diam.; semen leviter 5-sulcatum, albumine ruminato.

Distribution: Southeastern Papua from the Gulf District to the Milne Bay District, including Normanby Island.

Type specimen: PAPUA NEW GUINEA. Milne Bay District: Esa'ala Subdistrict, Normanby Island, Sewa Bay, lowland along coast, in broken forest, alt. ca. 10 ft., 21 October 1971, *F. B. Essig LAE 55066* (BH, holotype; CANB, isotype; LAE, isotype).

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