

NEWSLETTER

IPS TRAVEL 2016 SARAWAK & SINGAPORE ~ PALMS IN HABITAT

from David Tanswell, Jack Sayers, and
R. Haresh

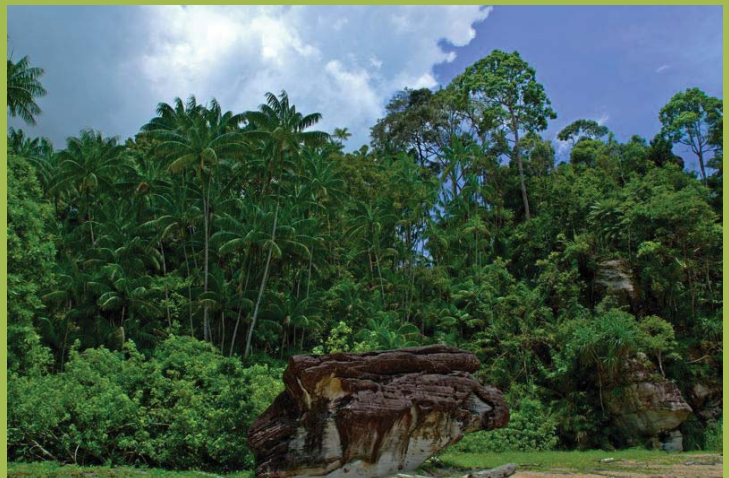
The 2016 IPS Biennial Meeting will take you to South East Asia and will have an emphasis on palms in habitat. Full details will be published well in advance, however we are aiming for the second week of June 2016.

The biennial starts in the river city of Kuching, capital of the west Malaysian state of [Sarawak](#) on the island of Borneo. We will be staying near the Sarawak River overlooking the Rajah Brooke's era Istana and forts and close to the old town with its busy shop houses, craft shops and markets. Over four days we will visit natural forest areas including [Kubah National Park](#), [Bako National Park](#) accessed only by boat, [Semenggoh](#) sanctuary to see the orangutans and of course palms, and also the Semenggoh Palmetum with its outstanding and extensive collection of mature understorey Sarawak palm species, as well as enjoying the unique culture, cuisine and history of this beautiful city. At each venue, options of walks and activities will be offered to suit various levels of interest and fitness. Smaller groups will be accompanied by local guides with a wealth of local knowledge, and volunteer guides who have good knowledge of the palms and trails. Some of the species to be seen in habitat include: *Areca insignis* var. *moorei*, *Areca minuta*, *Areca subacaulis*, *Arenga brevipes*, *Arenga undulatifolia*, *Caryota mitis*, *Cycas edentate*, *Eugeissona insignis*, *Iguanura palmuncula* var. *palmuncula*, *Johannesteijsmannia altifrons* (narrow and broad leaf forms), *Eleiodoxa conferta*, *Licuala bidentata*, *Licuala furcata*, *Licuala mattanensis* var. *mattanensis*, *Licuala orbicularis* (entire and split leaf forms), *Licuala petiolulata*, *Licuala sarawakensis*, *Licuala spicata*, *Licuala* sp, *Nypa fruticans*, *Oncosperma horridum*,

Oncosperma tigillarum, *Pholidocarpus maiadum*, *Pinanga brevipes*, *Pinanga auriculata*, *Pinanga crassipes*, *Pinanga ligulata*, *Pinanga pachyphylla*, *Pinanga ridleyana*, *Pinanga rupestris*, *Pinanga salicifolia*, *Pinanga tomentella*, *Pinanga variegata* var. *hallieriana*, *Pinanga veitchii*, *Pinanga* sp (divaricate leaves), *Salacca affinis* var. *borneensis*, *Salacca sarawakensis*, *Salacca vermicularis* and of course many rattan species *Calamus*, *Korthalsia*, *Daemonorops* and others.



Licuala orbicularis at Kubah, photo by David Tanswell



Oncosperma tigillarum near cliffs at Bako Beach, photo by Jack Sayers

From Kuching we take a short flight to the garden city of Singapore for three days where the focus will be on palms in cultivation. We will be staying in an area where the Singapore River, Chinatown, waterfront and Marina Bay areas will be accessible for you to enjoy the sights, sounds, colour and cuisine of this multicultural city. The very young but well established [Gardens by the Bay](#) will be our hosts and we will tour the Mediterranean, dry, and cloud forest climatic zones of the spectacular climate controlled domes, the vertical gardens of the Supertrees, and the extensive palm dominated gardens. We will also visit the historic [Singapore Botanic Gardens](#) and its famous Palm Valley, Orchid House, and ginger collection, *Cyrtostachys* avenue and mature plantings of *Johannesteijsmannia* species. (More on this below.) A couple of short, easy walking, habitat excursions to [Bukit Timah](#) and [MacRitchie Reservoir](#) reserves will see a broad range of palms. Optional visits to places of interest such as [Jurong Bird Park](#), [Singapore Zoo](#), [Night Safari](#), and to the *Nypa* swamps on [Pulau Ubin](#) can be undertaken on your own, or can be arranged through local agents.



Photos: Cliff-dwelling *Pinanga rupicola*, Bako, above right; *Johannesteijsmannia altifrons*, below right; above left the Supertrees at Gardens by the Bay, thanks to David Tanswell and Phillip Arrowsmith

For those looking for more palm adventures, a Borneo pre tour and a post tour to Darwin are planned, and possibly a tour to the Eastern Himalayan foothills of India.



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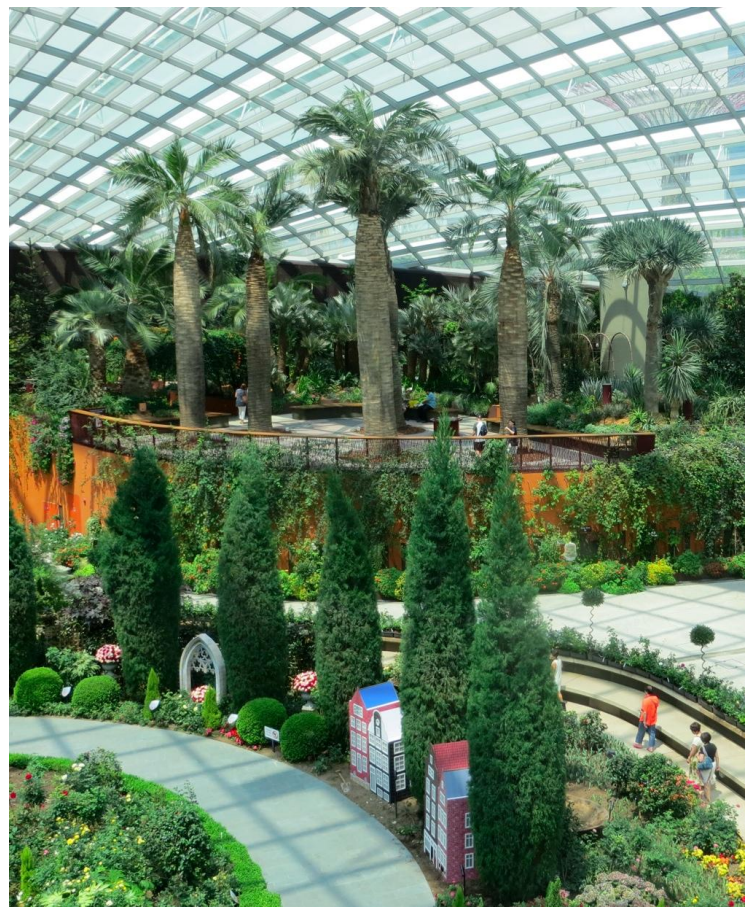
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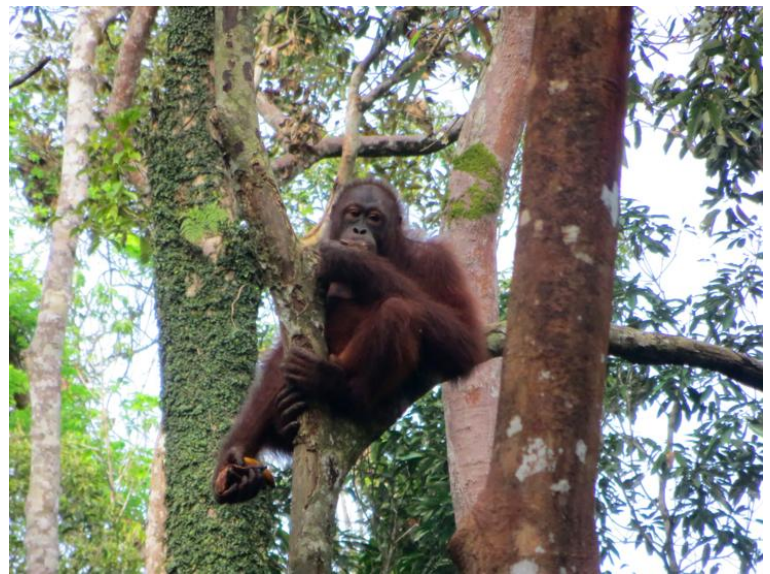
The **Borneo pre tour** will be immediately before the Biennial, travelling from [Miri](#) in the north of Sarawak and arriving in Kuching in time for the Biennial. This tour, travelling by road and boat, visits [Gunung Mulu](#), Lambir Hills, Niah Caves, Similajau, Batang Ai, Gunung Penrissen, as well as many roadside places of interest and sees many more palm species in habitat. If you want a more relaxing start to the Biennial arrive a few days early and observe the Sarawak Rice Festival which is usually the first week of June.



Carpentaria acuminata, Litchfield, Darwin area, Australia, photo by Jack Sayers



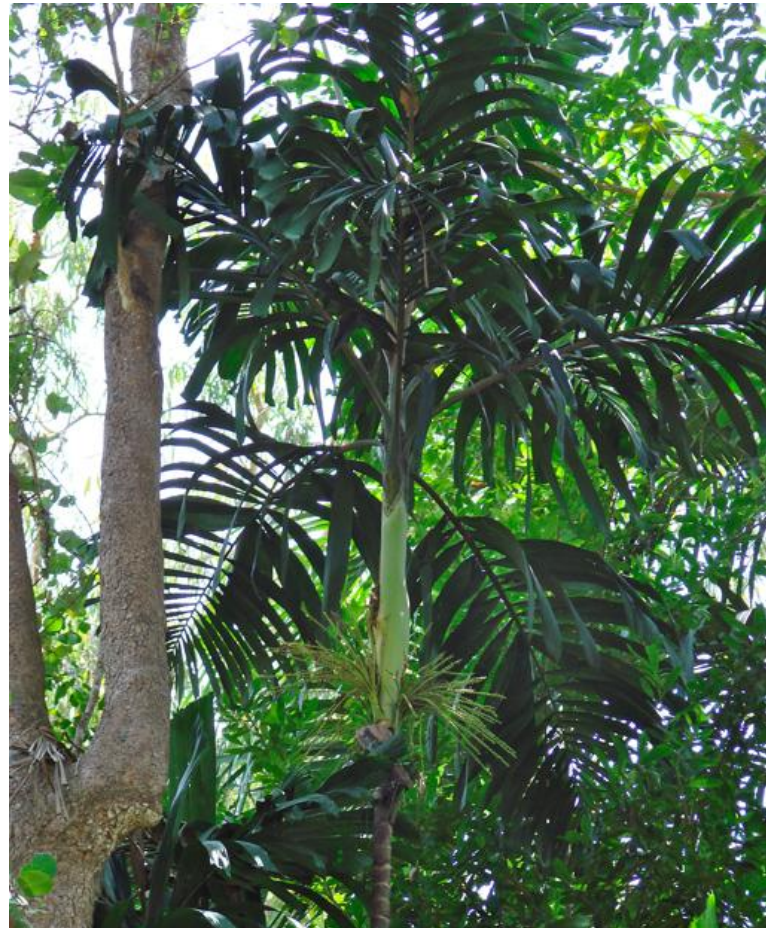
Cool climate dome, Gardens by the Bay, Singapore, photo by David Tanswell



Orangutan, Semenggoh, photo by Phillip Arrowsmith

DARWIN

We are planning a **post-tour to the Darwin area in Australia**. This tour will be primarily focused on seeing a wide range of palms in habitat over a relatively short period of six days and five nights. The tentative itinerary includes two nights in Darwin, two nights in Katherine, and one night in Kakadu, with stops at the [Howard Springs Nature Park](#), [Litchfield National Park](#), [Gregory National Park](#), [Elsley National Park](#), [Nitmiluk National Park](#), [Kakadu National Park](#), and [Holmes Jungle Nature Park](#). The palms we expect to see in habitat include: *Carpentaria acuminata*, *Hydriastele ramsayi*, *Livistona benthamii*, *L. humilis*, *L. inermis*, *L. mariae* v. *rigida*, *L. victoriae*, and *Ptychosperma bleeseri*. Many of these palms will be seen in dramatic settings near canyons, water holes, and waterfalls. In addition, there will be ample time to explore the [George Brown Botanical Garden](#) in Darwin. While visiting the various national parks, attendees will have the option for a range of tours in addition to palm viewing, such as boat and/or helicopter tours of the Katherine Gorge and wetland tours in Kakadu.

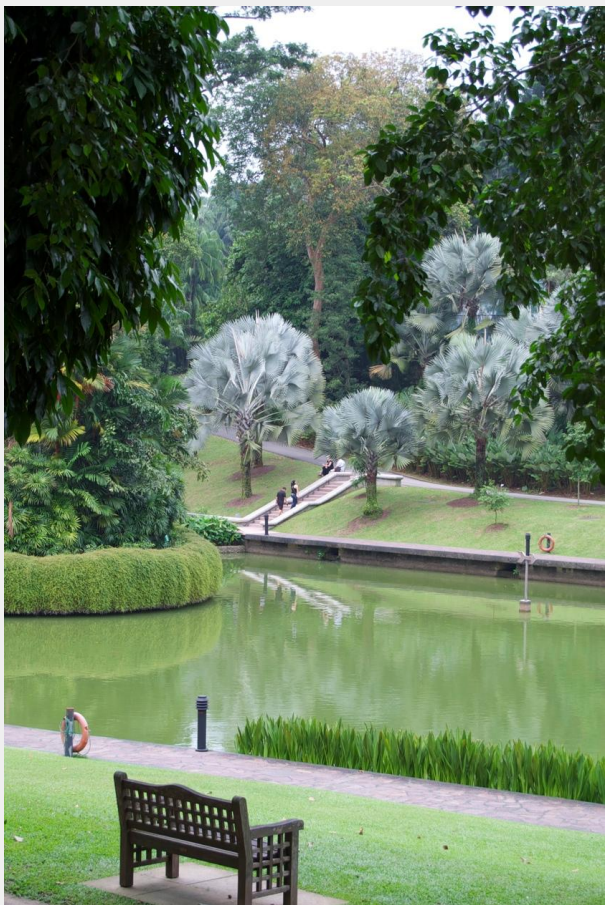


Top right, *Livistona victoriae*, Gregory; lower right, *Ptychosperma bleeseri*, Litchfield; above *Livistona inermis*, Nitmiluk, photos by Jack Sayers

SINGAPORE BOTANIC GARDENS



Singapore Botanic Garden, photos by Kim Cyr.



The Singapore Botanic Gardens has one of the world's finest collections of mature palms, dating from the 1870s or even earlier and numbering over 600 species. For example, there is an ancient clump of Sago Palm near the Tanglin (Main) Gate that is recorded as antedating the Gardens foundation in 1859. A large clump of Nibung (*Oncosperma tigillarum*) beside Office Gate Road was planted by James Murton in 1878 and now has a hollow centre in which more than 20 persons can stand. Nearby is a female Double Coconut (*Lodoicea maldivica*) planted in 1961 and currently heavy with seeds, her surroundings bearing testimony to her production of offspring over the past two decades. Outstanding beyond all of these, however, is Palm Valley, begun in 1879 and now home to more than 220 species of mostly larger palms, while the valley's lower end and its surrounds are habitat for smaller-growing understory species. In the adjacent preserved Rainforest are native palms such as *Oncosperma horridum* and various fiercely armed rattan species. Further north in the former Economic Gardens, where the rubber industry was founded, ancient African Oil Palms (*Elaeis guineensis*) can be seen towering 10 metres or more. These were in part the source of seed for establishing early oil palm plantations in the first half of the 20th century. Last but not least is Henry Ridley's avenue of Sealing Wax or Lakka palms, *Cyrtostachys renda*, first planted in 1905 and nowadays the brand symbol of the Botanic Gardens. This is an appropriate choice because where today you see lakes in the Gardens was formerly fresh water swamp forest and the palm in question is typical of such habitats. Come to SBG in 2016 and indulge in palms!

EASTERN HIMALAYAN FOOTHILLS

Preliminary planning for a proposed **Eastern Himalayan Foothills tour** includes a visit to the historic [Kolkata Botanic Gardens](#), fly to Bagdogra and drive to the foothills town of Kalimpong staying at the [Orchid Retreat](#) and visiting gardens, nurseries and palms in habitat, and perhaps an excursion into Sikkim. From there drive to Darjeeling through rolling hills of tea plantations and some natural forest. Palms that may be seen in habitat depending on the weather and your enthusiasm include *Wallichia disticha*, *Wallichia densiflora*, *Phoenix rupicola*, *Phoenix humilis*, *Arenga micrantha*, *Trachycarpus latisectus*, *Calamus erectus*, *Calamus flagellum*, *Calamus leptospadix*, *Caryota maxima* ('himalaya'), *Plectocomia himalayana*. A number of Indian native species may be seen in cultivation including *Arenga wightii*, *Bentinckia condapanna*, *Bentinckia nicobarica*, *Borassus flabellifer*, *Caryota urens*, *Caryota mitis*, *Corypha taliera*, *Hyphaene dichotoma*, *Livistona jenkinsiana*, *Phoenix acaulis*, *Phoenix sylvestris*, *Pinanga gracilis*, *Rhopaloblaste augusta* and the widely cultivated Himalayan palms *Trachycarpus martianus* and *Trachycarpus fortunei*. Although the primary framework of the tour will relate to palms in habitat and cultivation, the tour will take advantage of all opportunities such as: the many other plants in habitat and cultivation such as orchids, rhododendrons, cycads, flowering trees, etc; the nursery/horticulture industry of the Kalimpong and Sikkim areas; the tea plantations and factories of the Darjeeling area; the Himalayan villages and towns and their unique architecture shops and markets; the many people of differing ethnic backgrounds including Nepalese, Tibetans, Bhutanese; the wide range of culinary traditions; the many monasteries, shrines, temples; riding the [Eastern Frontier "Toy Railway" in Darjeeling](#); sunrise over the snow capped Himalayas from Tiger Hill; and heaps more!!!!



Young *Bentinckia condapanna*, an exotic palm from India, cultivated in a Hawaiian garden, photo by Bo-Göran Lundkvist

For more photos, visit [Sarawak Palms in Habitat](#) and [Gardens by the Bay](#) on PalmTalk!

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