



Palm Society of Southern California
e-Newsletter January 2023

"TAJ MAHAL PALM"

"Bentinkia condapanna"

The most ornamental
palm from India that
will grow in Southern
California

McGinnis garden

Check out the
distinct gold
crown shaft of
this species.

DISCLAIMER: Views and opinions are of individual authors and may not reflect those of the Southern California Palm Society and/or its Board of Directors.

Palm Society e-Newsletter promise: To provide the Palm Society of Southern California members who are unable to attend meetings, the closest possible experience of attending meetings without actually doing so. For both attending and non-attending members, a recap of the gardens and auctions is provided, plus beneficial cultivation information to assist members in developing the outstanding Southern California palm collections they deserve. **Note: All pictures of palms in Palm Society e-Newsletters are exclusively of palms growing in Southern California.**

Palm Society e-Newsletter Overview by Don Tollefson: The January 2023 Palm Society e-Newsletter consists of 72 pages, 55 full-page color photos of Southern California palms, the November 19, 2022 Palm Society of Southern California meeting recap, a farewell salute to retiring San Diego Chairman Phil Bergman, an exclusive interview with professional plant and palm sign maker Gary Wood and the regular Question and Answer Segment “Q and A” (Questions 211 - 220) of the most commonly asked questions about palm cultivation.

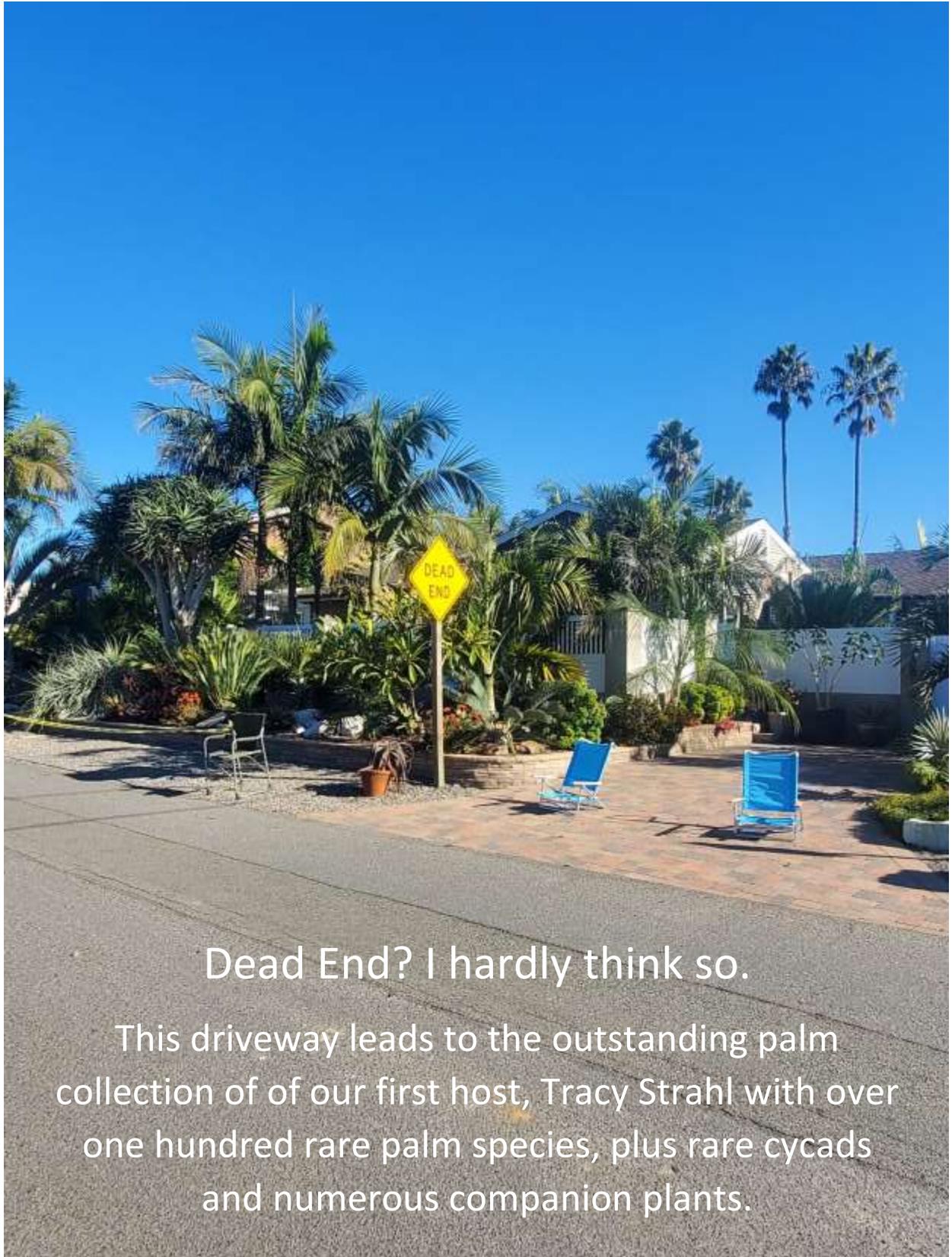
November 19, 2022 Meeting Recap by Don Tollefson: Once again, another great meeting featuring tours of two excellent private San Diego palm collections in close proximity to each other and to the ocean. The first garden tour was that of Tracy and Dana Strahl in Encinitas. The second garden tour was of the Mark McGinnis Garden in Oceanside. Both were outstanding gardens and palm collections with many mature rare palms plus young palms in training. We can't thank our hosts enough for another fabulous meeting!

The End of an Era: San Diego Chairman Phil Bergman Bids Farewell:

At the November 19, 2022 Palm Society of Southern California board meeting, San Diego area chairperson Phil Bergman announced to the board that his current term on the board would be his last and he would not be running again for reelection once his current term ended in January.

Phil has served nonstop on the PSSC board of directors as Vice President, President, past president, and San Diego Area Chairperson for the Southern California Palm Society for 16 terms. That's over 32 years of outstanding, dedicated service to the Southern California Palm Society and the promotion of rare palms and rare palm cultivation - the very essence of the Southern California Palm Society.

Not only has Phil served dutifully on the board of the Southern California Palm Society for those many years, he has also made perhaps the most significant contribution to palm cultivation in the history of Southern California palm gardening. In fact, I can think of no other person who rivals Phil Bergman in this category. That said, thank you, Phil, for your amazing dedication to palms, palm cultivation and for the knowledge and dedication you have shared with the rest of the Palm Society over the past decades. Thank you Phil, you will be greatly missed **Don Tollefson: e-Newsletter Editor**



Dead End? I hardly think so.

This driveway leads to the outstanding palm collection of our first host, Tracy Strahl with over one hundred rare palm species, plus rare cycads and numerous companion plants.

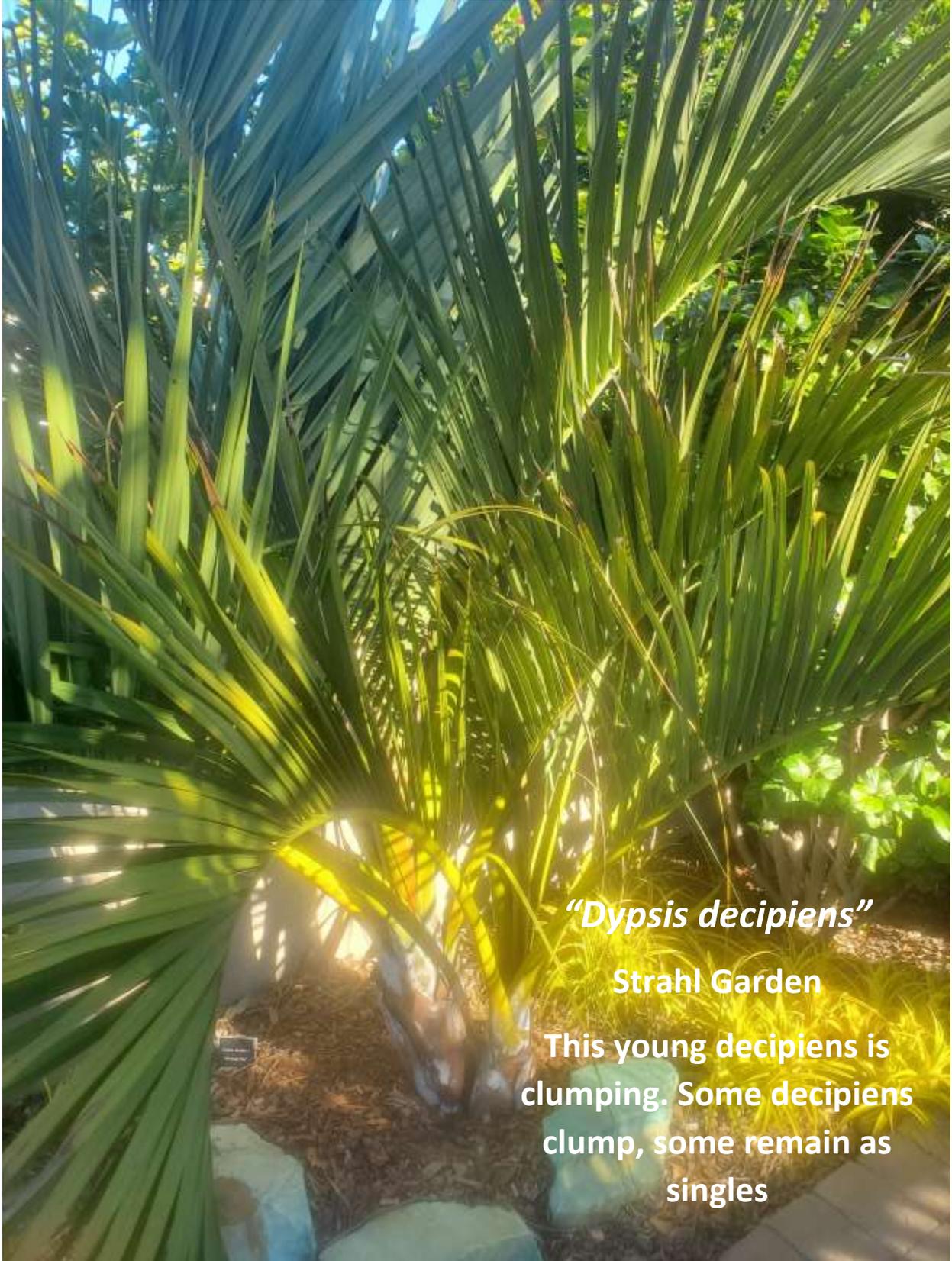


“TRIANGLE PALM”

A mature

“Dypsis decaryi”

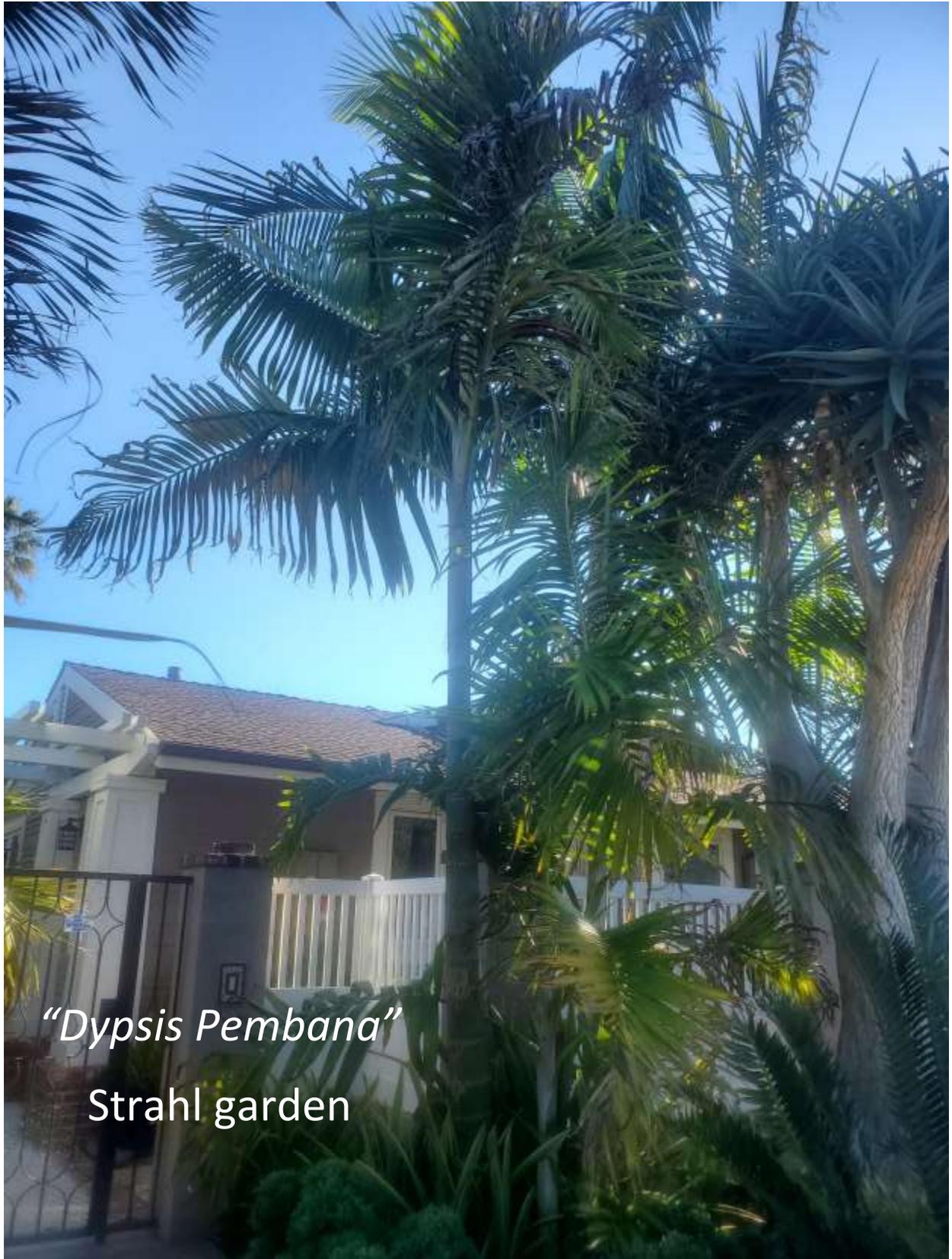
Strahl garden



“Dypsis decipiens”

Strahl Garden

This young decipiens is clumping. Some decipiens clump, some remain as singles



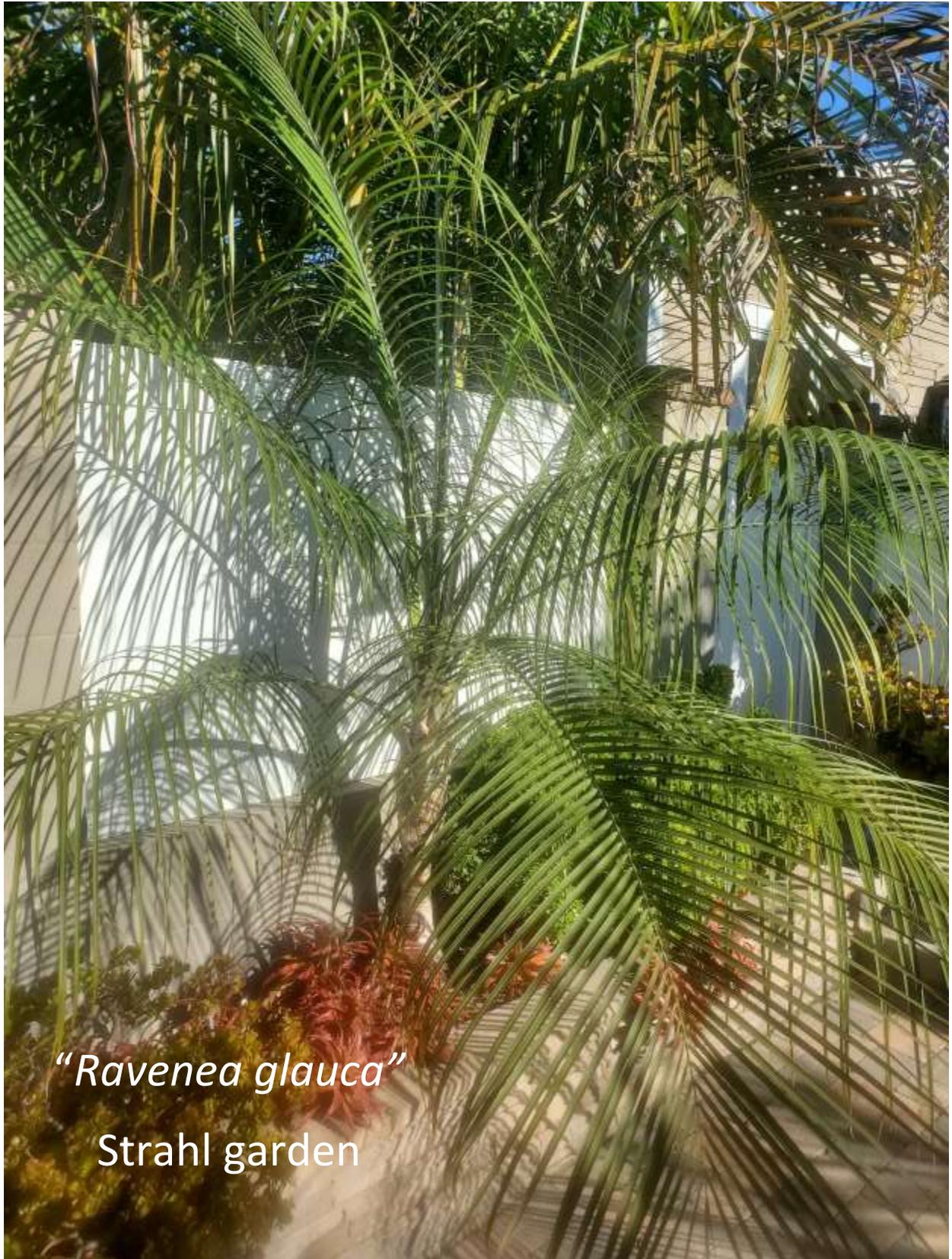
"Dypsis Pembana"

Strahl garden



*“Chembeyronia
hookeri”*

Strahl garden



"Ravenea glauca"

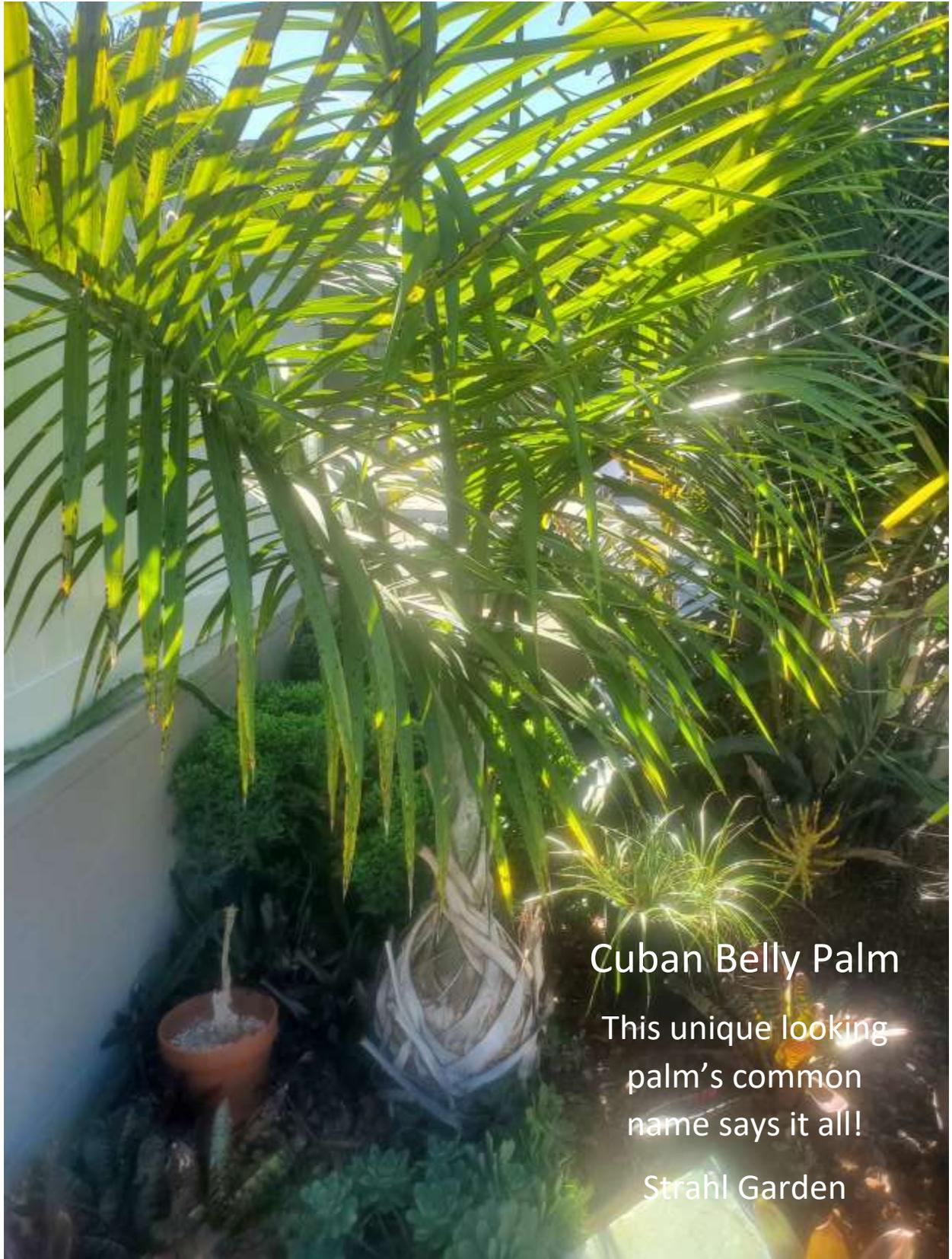
Strahl garden



“Dypsis ambositrae”

Strahl garden

This gorgeous *Dypsis* species is a must for every palm collection. There is another photo of this species later in the e-Newsletter taken at the McGinnis garden.



Cuban Belly Palm

This unique looking
palm's common
name says it all!

Strahl Garden



Can you tell a *Thrinax* from a *Trithrinax*? One point if you can name the genera, two points if you can name the species.

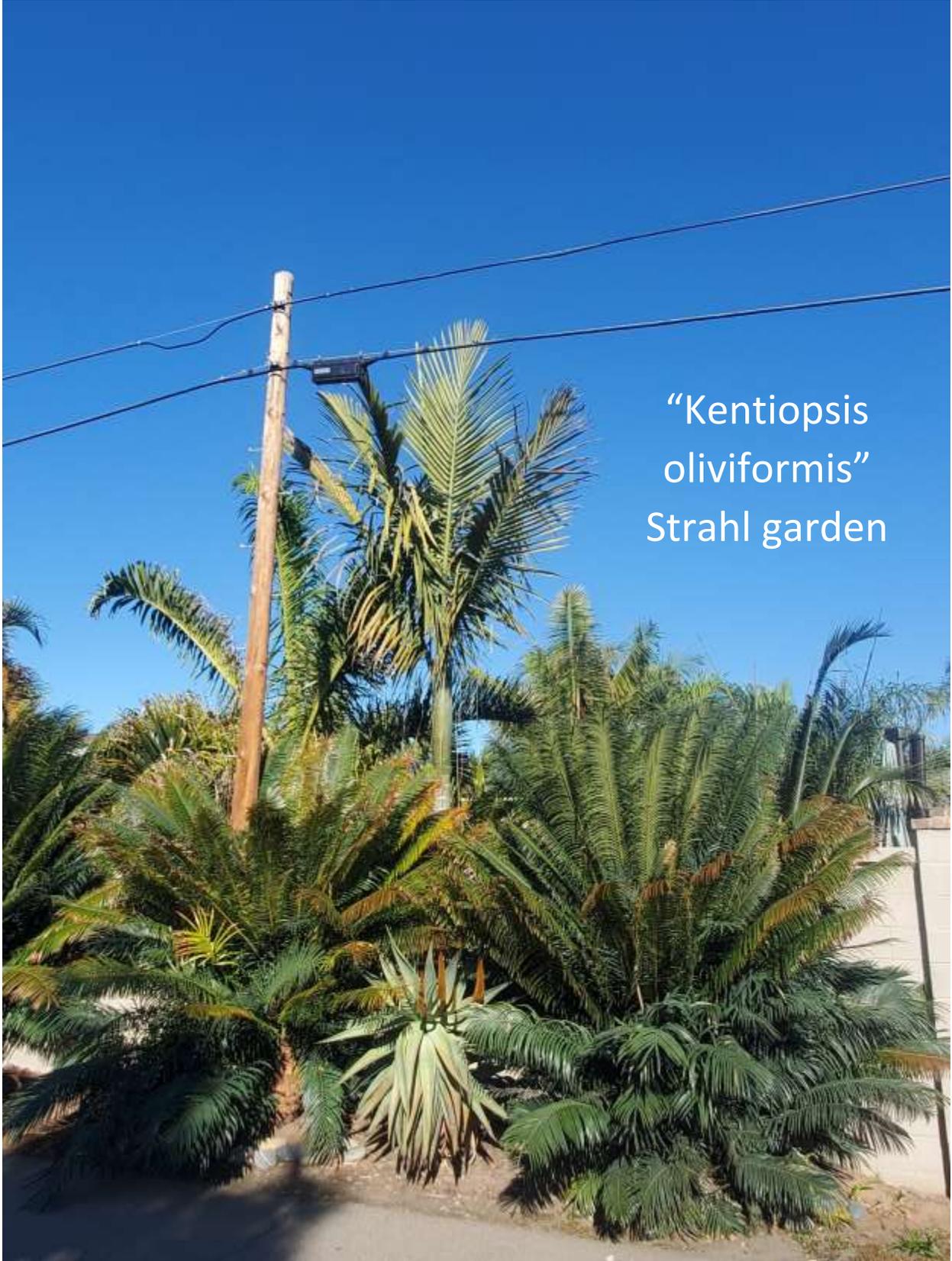
Strahl garden



A seeding Foxy Lady

“Dypsis pembana”
Strahl Garden





“Kentia palm”
Strahl garden

e-Newsletter interview with past president Gary Wood, owner of Plant Signs:

Gary Wood is currently best known among Palm Society members as the “go-to-guy” for palm and plant signs. Those of us who have been Palm Society members over the years also remember Gary Wood as a former president of the Palm Society and for always holding some sort of office along with being a proficient, North San Diego County grower of palms for distribution. What follows is a semi-comprehensive interview with Gary Wood and what Gary Wood is doing now.

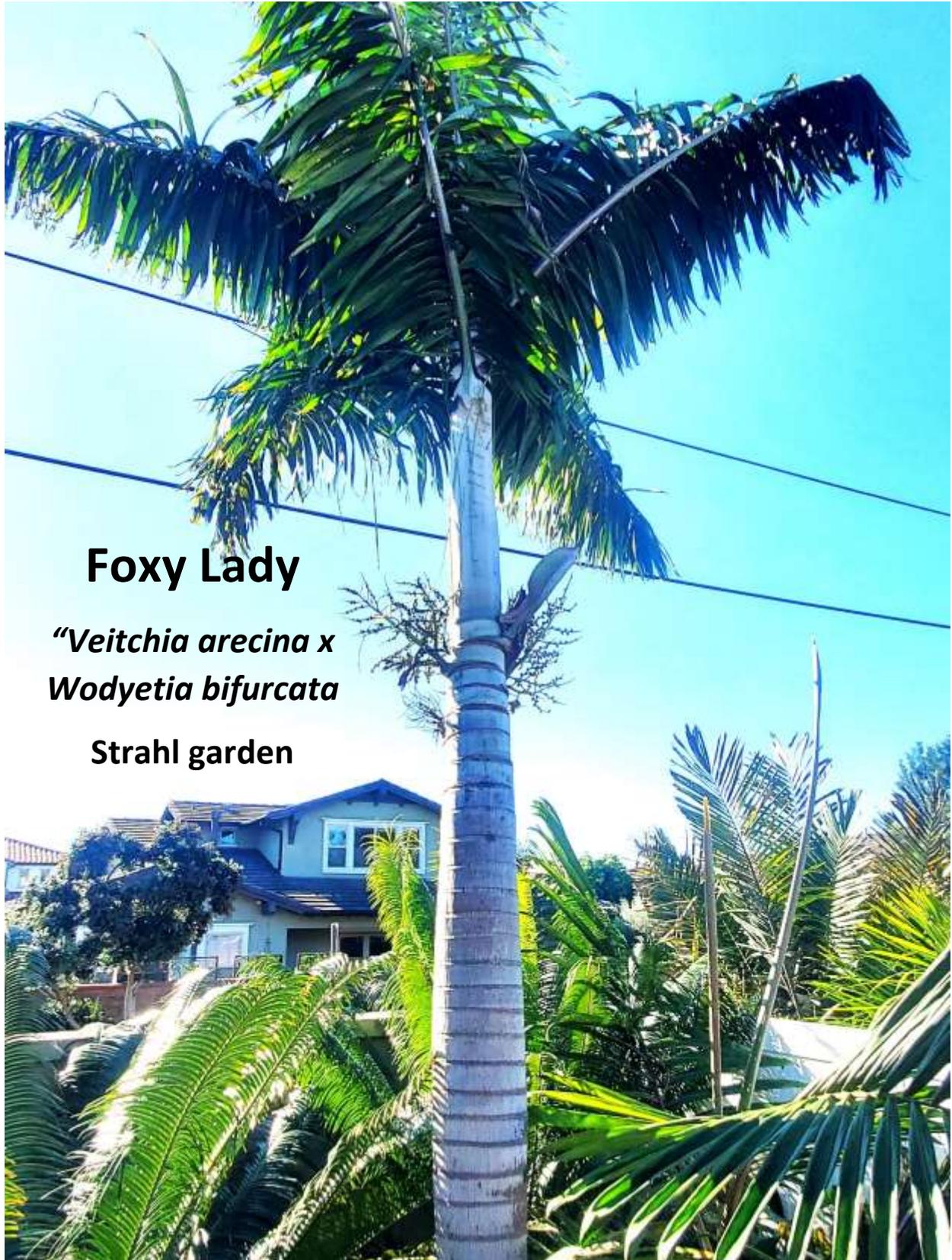
1. How old are you now, Gary, where were you born, grew up and attend high school? I'm 75 now, born in Redlands, California, raised in Fullerton, California and graduated from Fullerton Union High School in 1965. I graduated with a BS in agriculture from Cal Poly Pomona in 1969.

2. How and when did you end up in Fallbrook? Long answer: One day my college roommate pointed out the names of 3 or 4 palms as we were driving around. I told him they all looked alike, and he said there were over 2,000 varieties of palms. It struck me that there was a whole world I knew nothing about, so I bought a reprinted version of McCurrach's Palms of the World, and read it through several times. I joined the IPS in Northern California and discovered one of the benefits was I could get seed from their seedbank, run by Lucita Wait at the time. I got every palm seed I could lay my hands on and soon discovered that most wouldn't grow in Northern California where I was teaching elementary school in San Juan Bautista. I attended meetings of the Northern California Palm Society for a number of years and eventually learned what palms could grow in Northern California. I remember being particularly impressed with the gardens of Dick Douglas, Warren Dolby and a few others.



"Dypsis filifera"

Strahl garden



Foxy Lady

***“Veitchia arecina x
Wodyetia bifurcata***

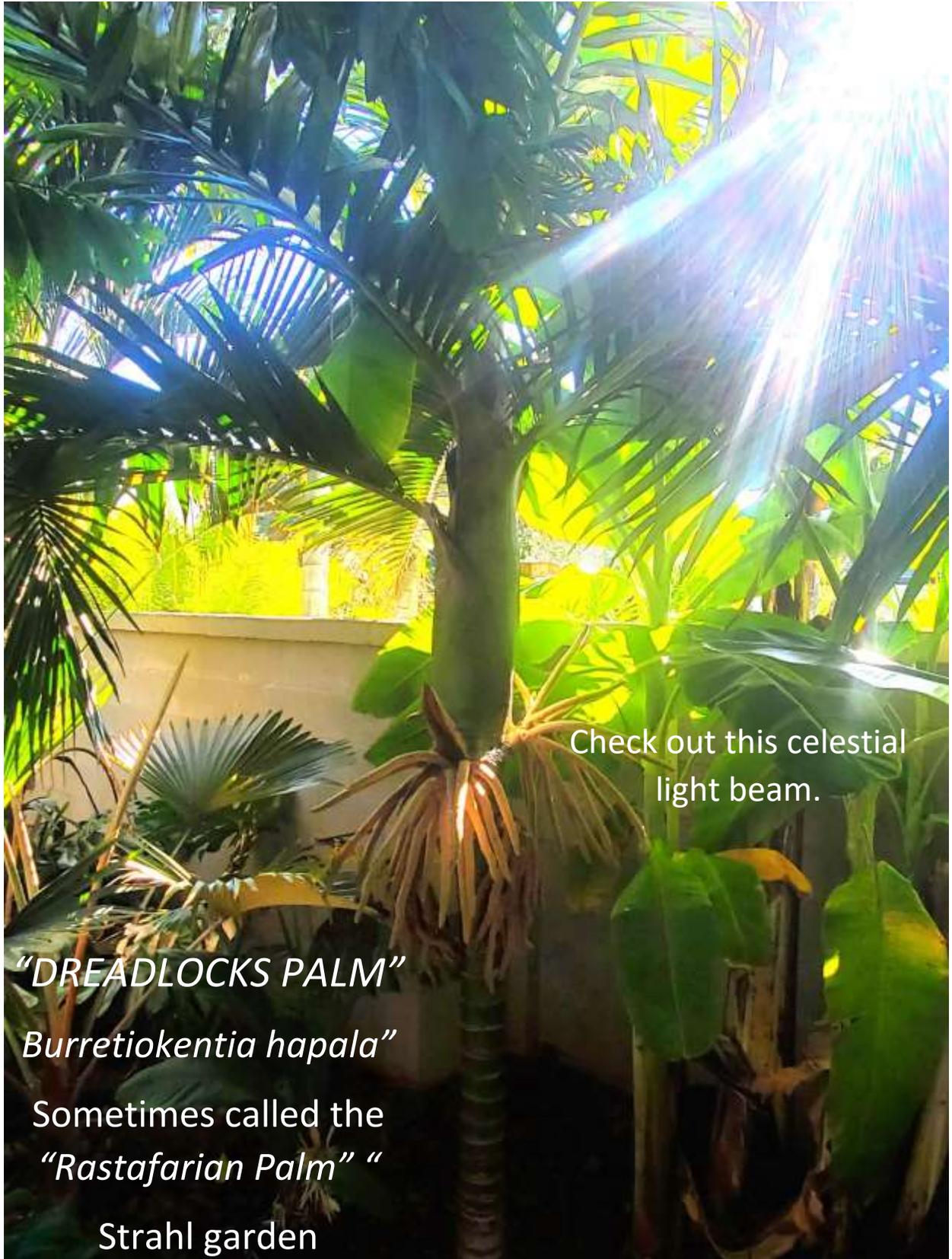
Strahl garden



"IVORY FLAMETHROWER"

"Chembeyronia hookeri"

Strahl garden



Check out this celestial
light beam.

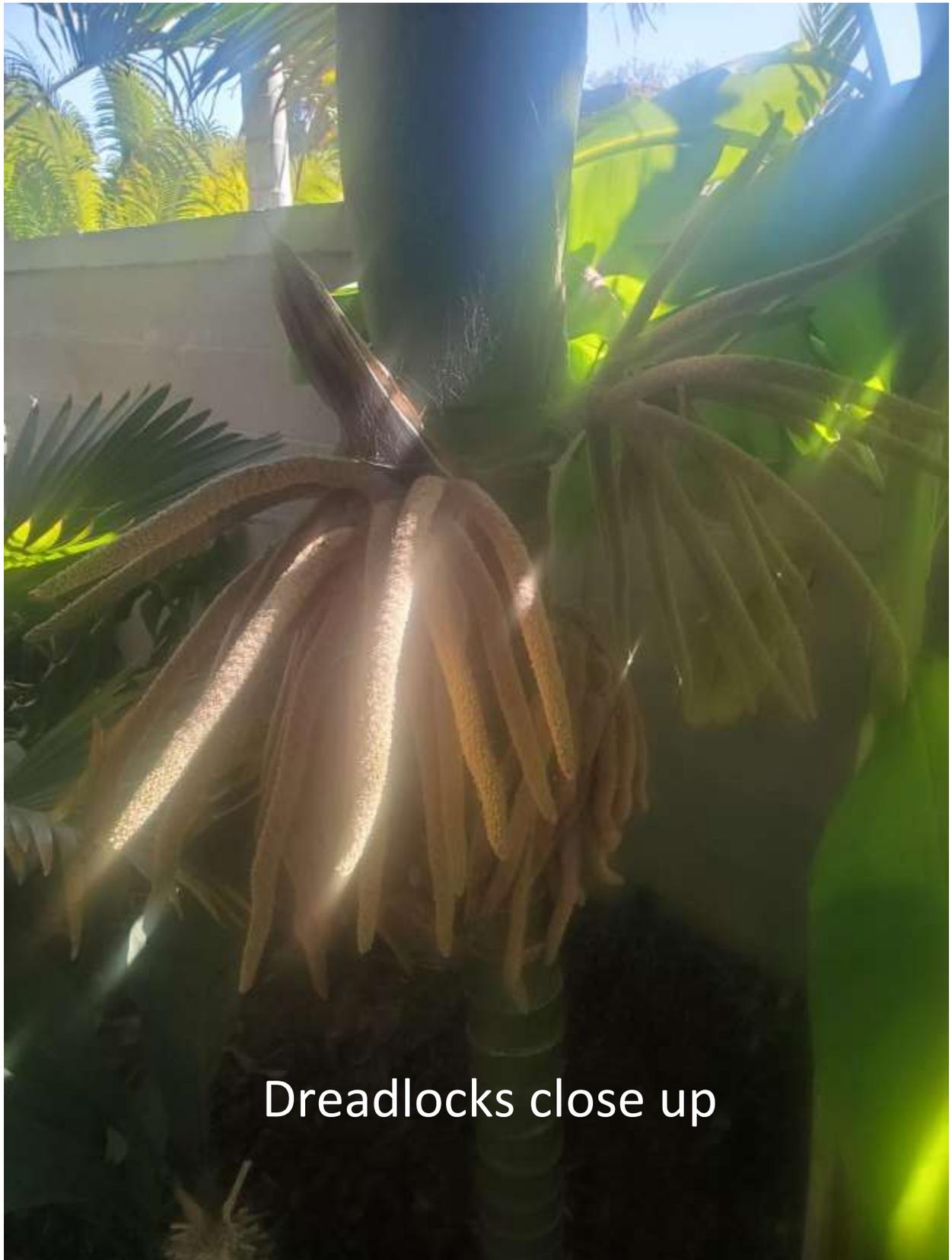
“DREADLOCKS PALM”

Burretio kentia hapala”

Sometimes called the
“Rastafarian Palm” “

Strahl garden

c



Dreadlocks close up

One time I discovered a mature *Jubaea chilensis* in San Jose that happened to be dropping fruit everywhere. I harvested about 100 seeds and germinated them in my greenhouse in San Juan Bautista where I was growing mostly bromeliads. I took a few of these germinated *Jubaeas* to the palm meetings in Northern California and lo and behold, discovered people were excited and bought every single one. I figured there may be potential here, so over the years sprouted hundreds of *Jubaea* seeds along with the seedbank seeds that I finally learned would grow in Northern California. I never had any trouble selling these seedlings, and kept a few for myself that I grew along. After my first wife and I divorced in 1982, I started thinking about moving to Southern California.

3. How and where did you and your wife Lynette meet? I met Lynette when some mutual friends had us both over for dinner. We were married about 2 years later. Since one can be an elementary school teacher anywhere, we decided to move to Southern California and found a nice one-and-one half acre piece of land in Fallbrook where I started my South Coast Palms nursery, and eventually found a job teaching in Temecula.

4. How old were you when you and Lynette got married? I was 34 when Lynette and I got married.

5. How many children do Lynette and you have? Four children.

6. Do you have any grandchildren? Eight grandkids (so far).

7. When did you become interested in palms? We moved to Fallbrook in 1986. After I built my greenhouse in San Juan Bautista, a friend told me about a bromeliad nursery in Corona that was going out of business and they were giving away all their plants. I got a pickup load of bromeliads and discovered they multiply quickly and are easily divided, so the greenhouse filled up fast. When I discovered I had a talent for germinating palm seeds (initially with *Jubaea*), I added shelves on the

walls of the greenhouse where I could put the pots of germinating palm seeds. Eventually I sold off all the bromeliads and grew solely palms afterward.

We lived in a small motorhome for a few months while our house was being built. While our greenhouse was going up, I built a small shade covered bench by the motorhome in which I started germinating palm seeds. I had been an avid reader of the Sunset Western Garden Book for many years and was well aware of the comment regarding their climate zone 23, "One of the most favored areas in North America for growing subtropical plants." That was a deciding factor. When we moved to our place in Fallbrook, we took two U-Haul truckloads of plants there, but only one truckload of furniture.

8. How did you learn about the Palm Society? In the back of McCurrach's Palms of the World book, there was information on how to join the IPS. I joined and later heard there was a chapter in Northern California which I attended and also joined.

9. When did you join the Palm Society? It was in the early '70's (Northern California chapter of IPS).

10 How many positions have you held on the Palm Society board and over what period of time? After we moved to Fallbrook and I joined the PSSC, I was the treasurer for a while, then Vice President under John Tallman, then President from 1994 to 1998. The plaque I was given upon the end of my term as President says there were 800 members at the time. (see picture attached). Lynette also served as the editor of the Palm Journal for several years.

11. When did you move from Fallbrook? I moved in 2013.



“TRIBEAR”

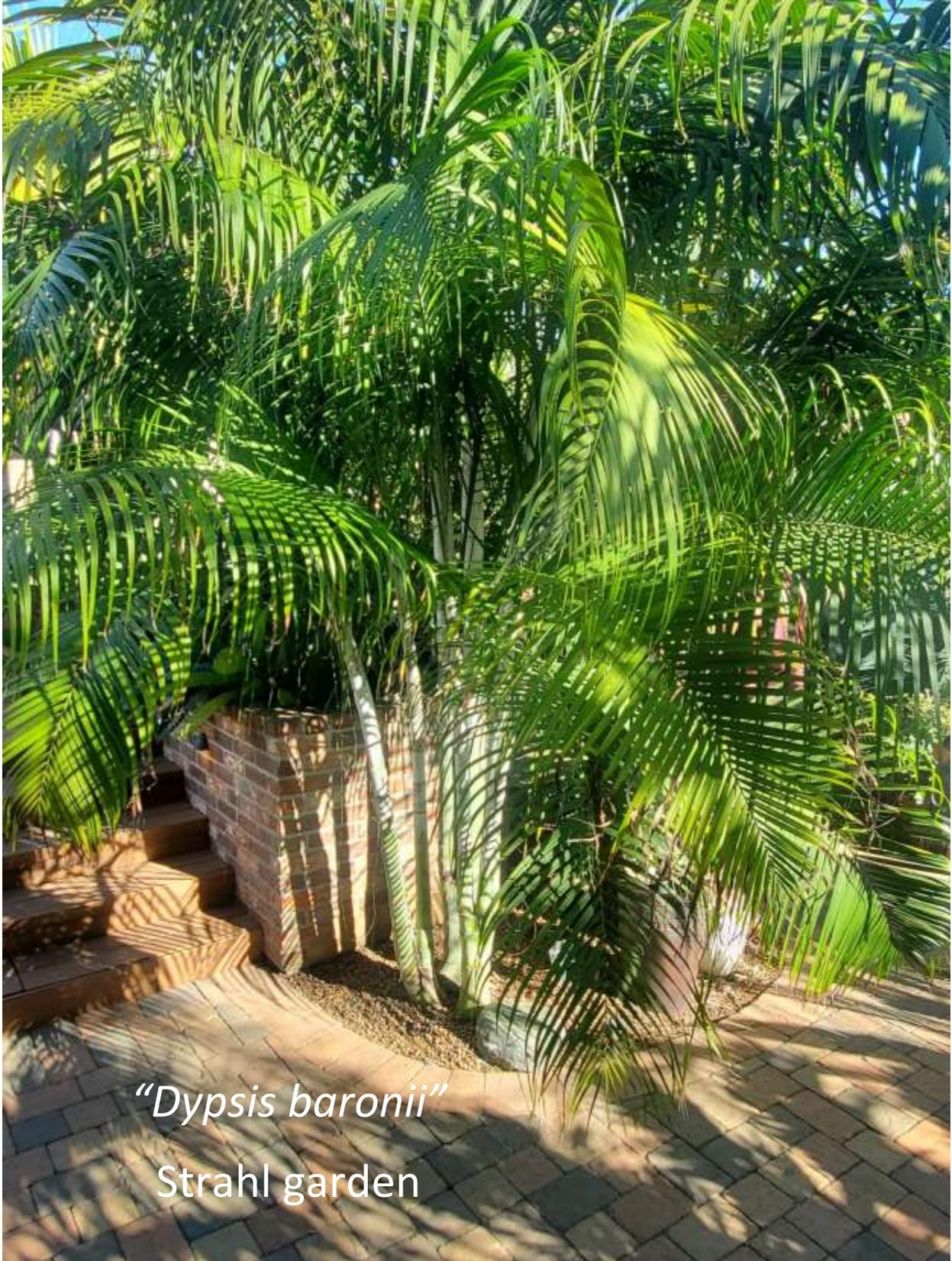
*Triangle palm x Teddy Bear
hybrid*

Strahl garden



“Dypsis robusta”

This palm has generated tremendous interest among Southern California palm enthusiasts waiting to see how it looks and performs as it grows. This is one of the largest in cultivation.



"Dypsis baronii"

Strahl garden



"Kentia oliviformis" Strahl garden

12. Where did you move to? Springville, Utah (45 miles south of Salt Lake City)

13. Why did you move from Fallbrook? Lynette's parents in Utah were getting older, all our kids lived in Utah at the time, and the price of water in Fallbrook continued to skyrocket. When I got a water bill one month for \$450 I realized something had to give. So, we made the hard decision to move on. Another factor was that I was getting older and it became harder and harder to prune and cut up the dead palm fronds from the over 250 palms we had in the ground, stuff them into the ten weekly garbage cans and haul them down to the end of the street where they were picked up.

14. How did you happen to get into the plant sign making business and when did you start? Every time I grew a rare palm in my nursery, I planted at least one in our garden in Fallbrook. When the number of palms got past 250, I decided a recipe box with 3x5 cards in it was not going to cut it any more. Every time someone came to visit the garden, they'd ask when I'd planted a given palm, and how big it was when I planted it. I knew Mardy Darien had nice signs for the plants in his garden, so I went over to see him one time to ask where he got his signs. He told me he had gotten them from the San Diego Zoo in trade for palms, but he was all bummed because they told him they wouldn't do it anymore. Something prompted me to ask him, "If I bought a machine that engraves plant signs, would you buy them from me?" He was enthusiastic and said yes. So, in 1996 I bought my first engraving machine. Chris and Janaka Stevens helped me develop my first web page, and I started selling plant signs all over the country.

15. How many signs have you created in your plant sign career? As of November 25, 2022, 1,369 customers have bought 109,407 signs from us. We sell to plant collectors, resorts, parks, hotels, tourist venues, etc.



"BIG CURLY"

"Dypsis prestoniana"

By far the fastest grower
of the large Madagascar
palms. Strahl garden



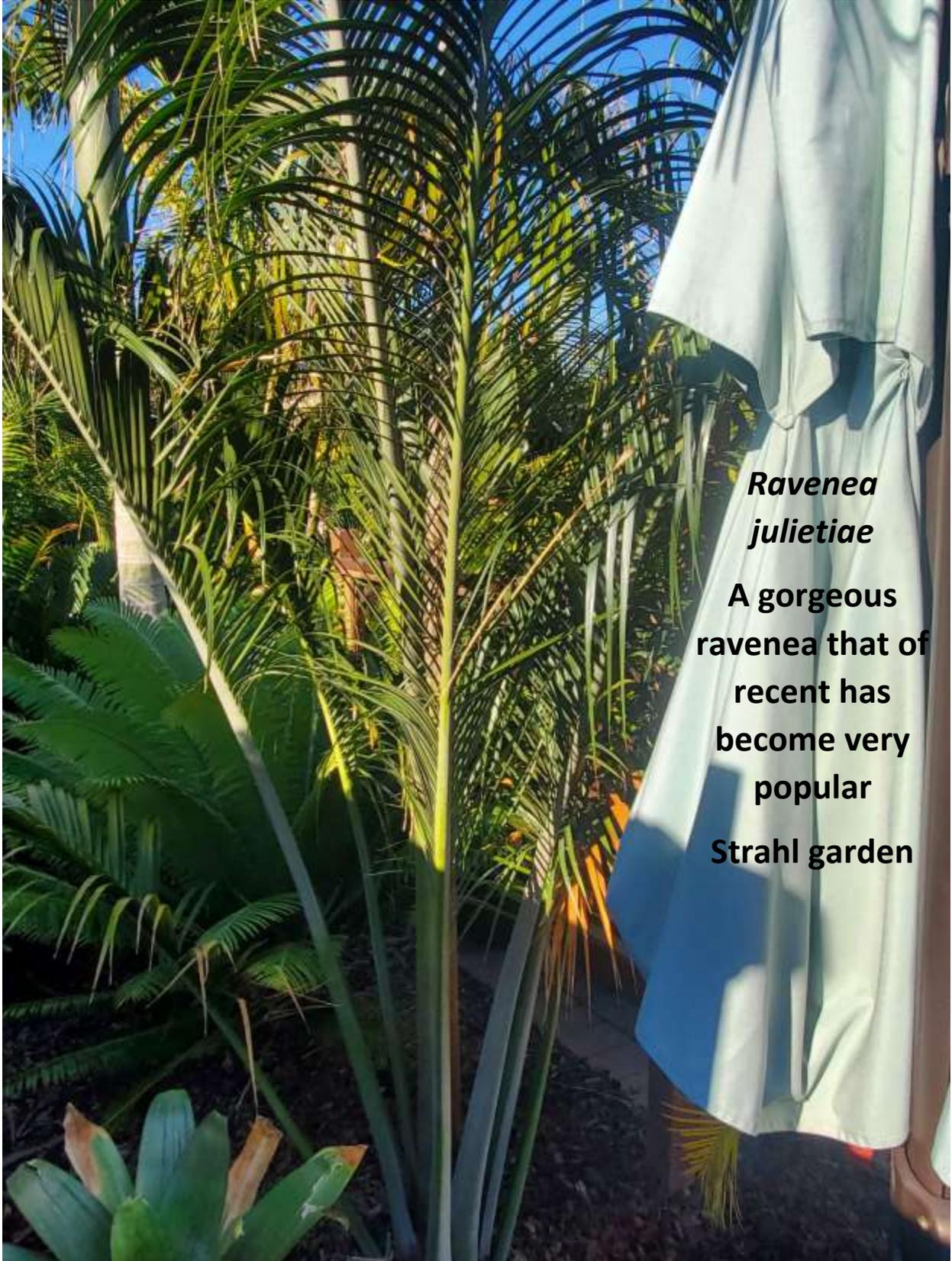
"BIGCURLY"

Dypsis prestoniana

Different *Prestoniana*

from above

Strahl Garden



***Ravenia
julietiae***

**A gorgeous
ravenea that of
recent has
become very
popular**

Strahl garden

16. Do you have anyone helping you make plant signs? My son Ian has been doing most of the engraving lately. For years we epoxied our signs on metal stakes using the system Mardy Darien was using. But after a number of years, it became apparent that this system was not viable in the long run. It wasn't that the epoxy failed, but that eventually rust would work its way between the metal stakes and the epoxy holding the signs on, and the signs would come loose. Needless to say, this was more than just annoying, so we now offer several different sign holders that don't use epoxy.

17. Do you still use the same sign-making machine that you started with? No. Several years ago we bought a larger, more versatile engraving machine after we burned out the first one.

18. Basically, how do you make a plant sign? The customers send us a list of what they'd like on their signs, we lay them out on the engraving machine computer and it makes the signs. The machine is basically a computer-controlled router.

19. How long does it take to make a plant sign? We offer quite a few different size sign plates, ranging from 1.5"x3" to 8"x10". A typical 3x5 sign with the common name, the scientific name and a country of origin might take just 5 minutes to engrave. Larger signs or those with a logo to engrave take much longer.

20. How many different sizes and colors of signs can you make? We offer 13 different standard size sign plates, but we have made any number with odd dimensions wanted by the customer. We offer 28 different configurations of sign holders (the 13 different size sign plates may have many different stake lengths). We have four color sign plates available. Here are the color options and percentages of sales by color: Black 60%, dark green 30%, light green 5%, White (with black text)(most popular in the desert) 5%, and red less than 1%.



Dypsis saintalucei Strahl garden



"BIG CURLY"
"Dypsis prestoniana"
Strahl garden

21. What options do you have for your stakes? We have several stake lengths up to 44". A few of our customers have embedded the stakes in concrete, and a few don't use stakes at all. These latter customers screw the plant signs into wooden posts, on walls or directly to the bark of trees. Our stakes are galvanized steel. I looked into aluminum stakes one time, but the cost outweighs the advantages. A few of our customers paint the stakes.

22. Of what material are your signs made of? Our sign material is 1/8" thick, two-layer UV-resistant laminated plastic. The engraving machine cuts out the top color layer, revealing the lower white layer as the color of the text.

23. What's the average amount of signs you engrave per order? The average size order is 80 signs. Most customers make subsequent orders after their initial one as their gardens change. I have had two customers completely replace all of their signs (500 and 1000 signs. The first garden's signs were destroyed by vandals with baseball bats. The second garden's signs were destroyed in a huge Santa Barbara fire a few years ago.

24. What's the largest order of plant signs you've ever filled? We have three customers who have ordered over 2,000 signs. About half of our signs go to government agencies (schools, parks, water districts, small botanical gardens, etc.) and the other half to individual collectors, commercial nurseries and private gardens. We've , made signs for just about every specialty garden you can think of: palms, cycads, roses, fruit trees, ferns, annuals, carnivorous plants, cactus, aquatic plants, bamboos, camellias, hibiscus, etc..

25. What's your most popular size for making plant signs? The 2"x4" and 3"x5" size signs are the most popular.



“TEDDY BEAR”

“Dypsis leptoceros

Strahl garden



Same "Teddy Bear" as the previous photo, different angle