

The Quarterly Journal of the Florida Native Plant Society

# Palmetto





*Asimina tetramera*. Photo by Dr. Anne Cox.

# Research and Collecting Permit Information for Protected Native Plant Species in Florida

by Jody L. Haynes, Montgomery Botanical Center

**M**ontgomery Botanical Center (MBC) is a 122-acre, private, nonprofit, botanical garden located in Miami, Florida. MBC's mission is to develop wild-collected, population-based, scientifically valuable collections of tropical plants – primarily palms and cycads – for research, education, and conservation purposes. Although we have an extensive collection of cycads and palms from around the world at MBC, we are lacking representative population samples of the only cycad and many of the palm species native to the U.S. My goal is to visit, document, and collect seeds and herbarium specimens from as many native coontie (*Zamia pumila*) populations as possible. MBC's Palm Biologist, Dr. Larry Noblick, will be focusing on palms. The result of our collective efforts will be the only population-based ex-situ germplasm collection of Florida native cycads and palms in the world.

As the Cycad Biologist at MBC, a significant part of my job involves planning, permitting, and conducting expeditions to various countries around the world for the purpose of increasing the quantity and quality of MBC's Cycad Collection. While employed at MBC, I have mounted highly successful expeditions to Honduras and Panama. With the experience gained in obtaining permits to collect and export seeds and herbarium specimens from these two Central American countries, I certainly didn't think obtaining permits to collect in Florida would be any more difficult...but was I ever wrong!

I quickly discovered that the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry (DPI), Bureau of Plant and Apiary Inspection in Gainesville oversees the issuance of permits to collect and conduct research on protected native plant species. I also learned that Chapter 05B-40 of the Florida State Statutes includes 1) definitions applicable to protected plant species in Florida, 2) instructions on how to obtain a permit to harvest plants or plant parts of protected species, and 3) a regulated plant index that lists all protected plant species in the state. According to this index, there are currently 553 protected plant species in Florida.

They are divided into three categories: 431 species are considered "Endangered," 114 species are considered "Threatened," and 8 species are considered "Commercially Exploited." Of these 553 state-protected species, 45 species are also federally endangered and 10 more are federally threatened; these latter 55 species are protected under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (as amended) and require additional permits not covered here.

As I delved deeper into the various regulations pertaining to the collection of protected native plants, I realized that the agency responsible for maintaining each of the numerous sites or locations in which I want to collect varies depending on the ownership of the property. For example, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) oversees and maintains the state parks in Florida, the National Park Service oversees the national parks, and individual county parks are controlled by the respective "Parks and Recreation" departments in each county. As I then learned, each of the controlling agencies also requires permits for collecting or conducting research on protected native plants within their respective parks and natural areas.

This article provides the information that I have compiled to date pertaining to research and collecting permits for protected native plants in Florida. The specific requirements for obtaining permits and the applicable contact information for each different type of property are listed in the following section.

Be aware that even though you obtain a specific permit from the appropriate agency that oversees a particular park or property, you must also obtain an additional permit from the Division of Plant Industry (DPI) for each and every location in which you wish to collect or conduct research – regardless of whether it is privately or publicly owned. For large-scale projects that include numerous locations, the specific permits should be obtained first and then sent to the DPI, which will then issue a single blanket permit for all of the public and private sites covered by the specific permits.

*Disclaimer: The information provided herein was accurate at the time of writing this article (June 2005). Although personnel may change, I believe the various agencies that issue research and collecting permits will remain fairly constant over time.* 🌸

# Permit Requirements & Contact Information

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**Private property:** Written permission from landowner must be sent with a completed "Request for Permit to Harvest Endangered or Commercially Exploited Plant(s) or Plant Part(s)" (Form DACS-08051), to:

Tyson Emery, Environmental Specialist III  
Division of Plant Industry, Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services  
Phone: (352) 372-3505 ext 155  
FAX: (352) 334-3816  
E-Mail: Emeryt@doacs.state.fl.us

- DPI permit application is available from Mr. Emery at the above address or e-mail.
- DPI must receive written permission/application at least two weeks prior to collecting to issue a permit.
- See state regulations and permit guidelines regarding native endangered, threatened, and commercially exploited plant species online at: [www.doacs.state.fl.us/pi/images/rule05B.pdf](http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/pi/images/rule05B.pdf). Download the pdf and select the "Chapter 5B-40" bookmark along the left side of the screen.

**State parks (all but Broward & Miami-Dade counties):** Submit research proposal and completed "Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP), Application for Research/Collection Permit" (Form FPS-R0009) to:

Donna Watkins, Special Projects Coordinator  
Bureau of Natural & Cultural Resources  
Mail Station 530  
3900 Commonwealth Blvd.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000  
Phone: (850) 245-3104  
FAX: (850) 245-3114  
E-mail: donna.watkins@dep.state.fl.us

- DEP permit application is available from Ms. Watkins at the above address or e-mail.
- DEP permit will allow you to collect or conduct research in any state park except those in Broward and Miami-Dade counties, which require separate, special permits (see below).
- DPI permit must also be obtained; see the "Private property" section.

**State parks (Broward & Miami-Dade counties):** Submit a research proposal and a completed "Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP), Application for Research/Collection Permit" (Form FPS-R0009) to:

Ernest M. Cowan, Environmental Specialist III  
Bureau of Parks District 5, Florida Park Service  
13798 S.E. Federal Highway  
Hobe Sound, FL 33455  
Phone: (772) 546-0900  
FAX: (772) 223-2591  
Cell phone: (772) 263-3752  
E-mail: Ernest.Cowan@dep.state.fl.us

- You can use the same DEP permit application as for the other state parks.
- DPI permit must also be obtained; see the "Private property" section.

**Broward County Parks & Natural Areas:** Submit a research proposal and a completed Broward Parks & Recreation "Application for Collecting Permit" to:

Patricia L. Howell, Natural Areas Specialist  
950 NW, 38 St.  
Oakland Park, FL 33309  
Phone: (954) 357-8137  
FAX: (954) 537-2865  
E-mail: PHOWELL@broward.org

- Collecting permit application can be obtained from Ms. Howell at the above address or e-mail.
- DPI permit must also be obtained; see the "Private property" section.

**Miami-Dade Parks & Natural Areas:** Submit a research proposal and a completed "Miami-Dade Parks Natural Areas Research Permit Application" to:

Research Review Committee, c/o Sonya Thompson  
Miami-Dade Parks Natural Areas Management  
22200 SW 137 Ave.  
Miami, FL 33170  
Phone: (305) 257-0933  
FAX: (305) 257-1086  
E-mail: parks@miamidade.gov

- Collecting permit application form is available online at: [www.miamidade.gov/parks/library/2005-Research\\_Permit\\_App.pdf](http://www.miamidade.gov/parks/library/2005-Research_Permit_App.pdf)
- DPI permit must also be obtained; see the "Private property" section.

**Ocala National Forest:** Submit a research proposal and a completed U.S. Forest Service "Forest Product Free Use Permit, Personal Use Only (Not For Resale)" (Permit FS-2400-8, OMB No. 0596-0085) application to:

Bob Wuestenhagen, USDA Forest Service  
Lake George Ranger District  
17147 East Highway 40  
Silver Springs, FL 34488-5849  
Phone: (352) 625-2520  
FAX: (352) 625-7556

- Note: DPI permit must also be obtained; see the "Private property" section.

**Lower Suwannee & Cedar Keys National Wildlife**

**Refuges:** Submit a brief research proposal to the Refuge Manager; if approved, you will be issued a U.S. Department of Interior Fish & Wildlife Service Special Use Permit.

Kathy Whaley, Refuge Manager  
Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys NWRs

16450 NW 31st Place  
Chiefland, FL 32626  
Phone: (352) 493-0238 ext. 11  
FAX: (352) 493-1935  
E-mail: Kathy\_Whaley@fws.gov

- DPI permit must also be obtained; see the "Private property" section.

**National Park Service:** Complete a "Scientific Research & Collecting Permit" application online via the National Park Service (NPS) Research Permit and Reporting System (RPRS): <http://science.nature.nps.gov/research/ac/ResearchIndex>

- Each park has its own contact person. Search for individual parks in Florida at the NPS Web site and then contact them to determine if your species of interest occur there. Do this prior to submitting the online permit application because, during the application process, the online service will ask you if you would like to submit the application to any additional national parks. Specify all parks where you wish to collect or conduct research and avoid having to go through the entire process for each park separately.
- DPI permit must also be obtained; see the "Private property" section.

**Jody Haynes** is the *Cycad Biologist* at the *Montgomery Botanical Center* in Miami, Florida. He has an extensive background and expertise in cycad botany and taxonomy, particularly among the cycads of the Americas. Contact Jody at [jhay@montgomerybotanical.org](mailto:jhay@montgomerybotanical.org), 305.667.3800, *Montgomery Botanical Center*, 11901 Old Cutler Rd, Miami 33156-4242.

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## Protected Native Palms & Cycads in Florida

(According to Florida State Statute Rule 05B-40)

### Endangered Species

*Pseudophoenix sargentii*  
*Roystonea elata*  
*Thrinax morrisii*  
*Thrinax radiata*

### Threatened Species

*Acoelorrhaphe wrightii*  
*Coccothrinax argentata*

### Commercially Exploited Species

*Rhaphidophyllum hystrix*  
*Zamia spp.*