

value of editors of such collected works in unifying the diverse contributions of numerous contributors. This closing chapter provides effective synthesis, including some interesting, elementary generalizations such as the three defining characteristics of tree islands, namely that they are (1) an integral part of wetlands, (2) a feature only of wetlands with a directional water flow (i.e., riverine wetlands), and (3) dynamic in their hydrology, sedimentation and erosion. In their closing syntheses, the editors go on to examine the future needs for experimental research and modeling research on tree islands within the Everglades ecosystem.

Tree Islands of the Everglades is a diverse, balanced blend of landscape ecology and systems science, enhanced by effective editorial synthesis. The publisher, Kluwer, has a record of publishing edited books of excellence, and this exceptional, overdue book is no exception. It should be essential reading and a valuable reference for scientists involved with the Everglades ecosystem. Although technical in character, the book should be understandable to any intelligent, interested reader, and should be attractive to bibliophiles of Floridiana. For such interested individuals, any other publication related to these Everglades hammocks would pale next to *Tree Islands of the Everglades*. The book is an excellent complement to *Everglades: the Ecosystem and its Restoration* (1994) by Davis and Ogden (reviewed, *J. Range Manage.*, 48:478).—David L. Scarnecchia, Washington State University, Pullman, Washington.

The Cycads. By Loran M. Whitelock. 2002. Timber Press, Portland, Oregon. 532 p., with 505 color plates and 13 line drawings. US\$59.95 hardbound. ISBN 0-88192-522-5.

This remarkable volume on cycads was written by the proprietor of Cycads Gardens of Los Angeles. This proprietorship is less than conspicuous on the Internet, but what is apparent is that Mr. Whitelock is, in the opinion of some, the foremost expert on Cycads in the world. His book *The Cycads* was, according to his own Preface, designed to serve double duty as a reference for both gardeners and botanists.

The cycads, taxonomically classified as the order of plants *Cycadales*, are the most primitive of the surviving gymnosperms. The order includes 11 genera and about 290 species, restricted mostly to the subtropics and tropics. The plants are generally recognized by their showy, palm-like leaves and their colorful, pod-like cones. About 10 species are commonly seen as horticultural plants. The sago palm, *Cycas revoluta*, is the best-known, most widely planted species.

Mr. Whitelock's book offers most of what a professional botanist or amateur enthusiast would want in a botanical reading or a botanical reference, plus more. Chapters 1-7 and Chapter 9 are brief in length (they total 61 pages), but are informative in content. Chapters 1-7 examine diverse aspects of these curious plants, including their paleobotany (Chapter 1), general taxonomy (Chapter 2), morphology and reproduction (Chapter 3), cultivation (Chapter 4), propagation (Chapter 5), conservation and protection (Chapter 6), and their uses by humans (Chapter 7). These chapters provide excellent background on the cycads, and are enjoyable reading. Chapter 9 contains 10 pages of tables (about 30) grouping species of cycads that have particular morphological, horticultural, or ecological characteristics, e.g., *treelike cycads*, *temperate to warm temperate cycads*, or *cycads that tolerate salt*. These tables are convenient references. Following Chapter 9, the book contains a glossary and an extensive bibliography.

Most of *The Cycads* is contained in Chapter 8, which covers species in all 11 genera of cycads. These species descriptions are concisely worded and highly informative. They include origins of

the generic and specific epithets, morphology (vegetation and cones), habitats, ecology, cultivation, propagation distribution, conservation, curiosities—the diversity and comprehensiveness here are exceptional. The text is appropriately abbreviated in the taxonomic style in the taxonomic parts of these descriptions, but is much less abbreviated in the parts describing ecology, conservation and management.

Within the bounds of Chapter 8 are 2 sections that include 505 color plates of varying sizes but uniformly high quality, the product of the author's travels to seek out cycads around the globe. This section of plates is a *tour-de-force* of color photography – an artistic, *cycad-delic* collection of plants, cones, leaves, landscapes, and artifacts that unmistakably show that the author has intellectual and aesthetic enthusiasm for these curious plants beyond just science. These plates show the artistry of nature and humanity related to cycads in its many forms at its very best. They include such diverse art as complex, exotic tropical landscapes, huge, colorful cones of cycads in reproduction, a cycad-adorned Tiffany cigar box, and a Japanese cloisonné plate in a motif of *Cycad revoluta*. All of this diversity, particularly in the color plates, but also in the text, makes *The Cycads* more than just a botanical and horticultural reference; it is a technically thorough, aesthetically pleasing blend of taxonomy, ecology, horticulture, paleobotany, natural art and human art.

Genuine passion is generally required to produce work of quality, and *The Cycads* shows quality from start to finish. It shows the remarkable effort and skills of the author, and is an admirable product of the publisher, Timber Press. The book will be of particular interest to professional and amateur botanists, and professional and amateur horticulturists. But all readers interested in the science, the aesthetics, and the artistry of nature will appreciate the book.

Since its initial publication in 2002, *The Cycads* has already been reprinted once. At US\$59.95, the book is an exceptional value. Look for it to be reprinted again when this printing is exhausted. But in case this printing is the last, you will not be disappointed if you acquire a copy now. The book will, at the least, greatly enhance your appreciation of these interesting, primitive plants.—David L. Scarnecchia, Washington State University, Pullman, Washington.