

'America's Most Beautiful Home and Garden Center' hosts David Leaser

CORONA DEL MAR, CALIF. – Rogers Gardens (<http://www.rogersgardens.com/>) held a botanical lecture on palms at its Orange County facility, featuring noted artist, photographer and author, David Leaser. Leaser's lecture was entitled, "Great New Palms for Southern California."

New propagation techniques and inexpensive traveling are fueling a renaissance in the palm world. The Palm Society of Southern California lists more than 350 palms that will grow in our area. Leaser showed examples of several exciting palms that are becoming readily available to home gardeners, including:

Dwarf sugar palm (*Arenga engleri*) Hardy to about 20°F, this palm gets its common name from the sugar that is processed from its fruit. Native to the Ryuku Islands in Japan, this palm forms a clump to about 15 feet tall and bears fragrant, yellow flowers. This palm can be grown indefinitely in a container.

Bismarck palm (*Bismarckia nobilis*) Hardy to about 28°F, the Bismark palm is named in honor of the 19th century German chancellor, Otto von Bismark. Native to Madagascar, this palm bears massive, blue-gray fronds and makes a stunning focal point in a large garden. Grows to 30 feet tall with a 16-foot spread.

Jelly palm (*Butia capitata*) Hardy to about 15°F, this palm is a highly variable feather palm, with some specimens exhibiting silver-blue upright fronds, others exhibiting graceful arching fronds. From Brazil and Uruguay, this palm grows in full sun to about 20 feet tall. If you are looking for an allaround great palm for any area of California, this palm should be on your list.

Miraguama palm (*Coccothrinax miraguama*) Hardy to 25°F/-4°C. Native to Cuba. Single-trunked palm to 20 ft./6 m./6 m tall with a spread of 10 ft./3 m. Trunk is covered with a wooly fiber; fronds are small, rigid and shiny green with a grayish underside. An attractive landscape palm.

Triangle palm (*Dypsis decaryi*) Hardy to 18°F/-8°C. This single-trunked palm grows to 30 ft./9 m. tall with a spread of 12 ft./4 m. Gray-green leaves are arranged in groups of three, giving the crown a triangle appearance. Sun and drought tolerant.

Mediterranean fan palm "Moroccan Blue" (*Chamaerops humilis 'cerifa'*) Hardy to about 6°F, this palm is a variation of the common green version. Recently discovered in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco, this palm has silverblue fronds, similar to the blue hesper palm (*Brahea armata*). Perfect for small gardens, seldom reaching 20 feet tall.

Flamethrower palm (*Chambeyronia macrocarpa*) Hardy to about 28°F, this uncommon palm is now being grown by a number of commercial growers. Emerging leaves are frequently colored in shades of scarlet, orange or maroon. One form, named 'watermelon,' bears a striped crownshaft, adding even more interest to the display. Native to New Caledonia, this small tree matures slowly to 20 feet tall.

Silver pimento palm (*Schippia concolor*) Hardy to 30°F, this palm from Belize and Guatemala, this single-trunked palm with palmate fronds grows slowly to 15 ft./5 m. tall with a 5 ft./2 m. spread. Trunk is about 3 in./8 cm. diameter. Leaves are dark green and very glossy. Looks similar to *Coccothrinax* and *Thrinax* palms.

Windmill palm (*Trachycarpus fortunei*) Hardy to 0°F. Grows to 25 feet tall in full sun. Highly tolerant of cold climates, including snow. A great container plant.

Foxtail palm (*Wodyetia bifurcata*) Hardy to about 30°F, the foxtail palm was unknown to botanists until the 1980s. The foxtail palm has proven easy to propagate from seed; just a few years ago, these trees were considered a collector's item. A perfect avenue planting for small residences. Rarely growing to more than 20 feet tall; grows moderately fast.

Sitting upon seven acres across from Fashion Island in Corona Del Mar, Roger's Gardens has grown to be known as 'America's Most Beautiful Home and Garden Center.' Presented in a garden like setting, the nursery offers one of the most extensive varieties of plants, outdoor living, home decor, landscape, holiday, pottery and fountains.