

Bangalow palm seeds in my Auckland garden

Rhys Gardner

One day in April 2012 I noticed a scattering of palm seeds underneath the large pohutukawa (*Metrosideros excelsa*) in front of my home at 5 Ward Terrace, Sandringham. It did not take much to decide that they belonged to the bangalow palm, *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*.

There are several groups of these Australian palms planted in properties within the immediate few



Fig. 1. "Seeds" of nikau (left) and bangalow (right). Note especially the dark (reddish brown) channels through the latter's endosperm. Unvouchered (nikau from Little Barrier Island; bangalow from planting at Epsom Library, Manukau Road). Scale (central) 1 cm square.

References

- Cameron, E. K. 2000: Bangalow palm (*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*) begins to naturalise. *New Zealand Botanical Society Newsletter* 60: 12-16.
- Orr, A.; Kitching, R. 2010: *The butterflies of Australia*. Allen & Unwin, New South Wales.

hundred metres. The globose seeds (actually, the fruit stone plus fibrous remains of the fleshy mesocarp) are almost 1.5 cm in diameter, too large I think to be handled by any of the common local birds except the blackbird (*Turdus merula*).

The 'seeds' of the bangalow, with those of the nikau for comparison, are shown in Fig. 1. They are easily distinguished. Those of the nikau are elliptic-oblong (almost 1 cm in the offshore island form shown here), with mesocarp fibres that are relatively narrow and mostly unbranched. Those of the bangalow have notably flattened and branched mesocarp fibres, and their endosperm is ruminant; that is, invaginations of the endocarp, like rusty veins, run haphazardly through the pale hard endosperm.

In accordance with the greater size of the bangalow seed, its first-formed seedling leaves are considerably wider than those of nikau. Perhaps this can give it a competitive advantage when the two species germinate together.

The spread of bangalow into native forest, which has already begun (Cameron 2000), might be reduced or even halted if we introduced to the country two "palm dart" species of butterfly, whose caterpillars feed on its leaves (Orr & Kitching 2010).

A tale of Shakespearian pioneers

Maureen Young

While researching for the Auckland Botanical Society's Bulletin No. 30, *A checklist of vascular plants recorded from Hauturu, Little Barrier Island* (Beever et al. 2012), it became obvious that many of the plant specimens from Hauturu that have been lodged in the Auckland War Memorial Museum herbarium (AK) were collected in the period 1897-1910 by two women, E.M. Smith and Miss F.I. Shakespear. R.H.

Shakespear was the first ranger on Hauturu, so the connection of Miss Shakespear to the island was obvious, but the identity of E.M. Smith was unknown. Some detective work has revealed the following story.

Robert Henry Anson Shakespear arrived in Auckland in the mid 1870s and in 1878 he eloped with 18 year-