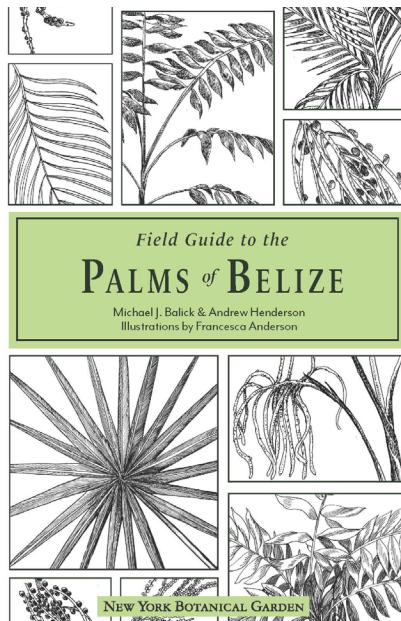


NYBG

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 16, 2022

Based on More Than a Decade of Research, *Field Guide to the Palms of Belize* Is Now Available from NYBG Press in Hardcover, Softcover, and Digital Formats

Detailed Botanical Information by NYBG Scientists and Illustrations by Artist Francesca Anderson Provide a Comprehensive Guide to One of Belize's Most Important Plant Families



Bronx, NY—Combining the research interests of two leading plant scientists, *Field Guide to the Palms of Belize* by Michael J. Balick and Andrew Henderson provides a compact yet comprehensive resource about one of the most important and highly useful plant families in the Central American country of Belize. Recently published by The New York Botanical Garden Press, the *Field Guide* is available in hardcover, softcover, and digital formats.

With notes on local uses of palms, both historical and contemporary, the book is based on more than a decade of field studies, during which the authors, both longtime scientists at The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG), collected specimens of this richly diverse plant family and interviewed dozens of people about how various palm species are used for food, fiber, fuel, and medicine, and as part of cultural rituals.

“One could survive for a long time in the forest just from the bounty of the palms,” Professor Sir Ghilleen Prance, FRS—former Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and, before that, NYBG’s Senior Vice President for Science—writes in the book’s foreword. “Palms provide

all the building materials needed to build a home; offer many types of food, from palm hearts and fruits to cooking oils; produce fibers to craft a variety of utensils; and render numerous medicines. . . . It is wonderful that the small country of Belize has such a great diversity of palms.”

In addition to information about local uses, the *Field Guide* contains botanical descriptions, information about species’ range and habitats, and local common names for the 39 species and 25 genera (groups of closely related species) of palms known to be found in Belize. Botanical keys provide the information needed to identify a plant’s genus and species based on its physical attributes such as its leaves and fruit. The book also incorporates the results of a literature survey of previous studies.



A drawing of *Schippia concolor*, also known as mountain palmetto, by Francesca Anderson from *Field Guide to the Palms of Belize*

Most species descriptions are illustrated with beautifully detailed drawings by noted artist Francesca Anderson, who studied botanical illustration at The New York Botanical Garden and whose work has been featured in scientific journals, books, and magazine articles. Her artwork has been exhibited internationally and is part of the permanent holdings of many public and private art collections, including the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C.; the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh; and the Shirley Sherwood Collection at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in the United Kingdom.

As the authors note in the introduction, the *Field Guide* draws on the research and publications of NYBG’s Belize Ethnobotany Project, which Dr. Balick established with his colleagues Dr. Rosita Arvigo and Dr. Gregory Shropshire in 1987 to survey the plant life of the country and study the traditional and contemporary uses of many plant species. The book’s scientific treatments of palms are based on *Field Guide to the Palms of the Americas*, published in 1995 by Dr. Henderson and collaborators.

“The resulting book celebrates our partnership that began four decades ago, when, as students, we collected palms along the newly opened Santarém-Cuiabá highway in Amazonian Brazil,” Drs. Balick and Henderson write in the introduction. Since then, Dr. Henderson has specialized in the study of palms, and Dr. Balick has focused on ethnobotany, which studies the multifaceted relationship between plants and people. Referring to the *Field*

Guide, they add, “We trust that it will be useful to local people, visitors to Belize, and to those who devote their efforts to understanding and protecting the ecosystems of this wonderful place.”

About the Authors

Michael J. Balick, Ph.D., a staff member at The New York Botanical Garden since 1980, is currently Vice President for Botanical Science and Director and Senior Philecology Curator of the Garden’s Institute of Economic Botany.

Andrew Henderson, Ph.D., is Curator Emeritus in the Garden’s Institute of Systematic Botany. He was a staff member at The New York Botanical Garden from 1987 to 2020.

About The New York Botanical Garden Press

The New York Botanical Garden Press is one of the largest publishing programs of any independent botanical garden in the world and provides a means for communication of research carried out by scientists at the Botanical Garden and elsewhere. Established in 1896, the program focuses on advancements in knowledge about the classification, utilization, and conservation of plants and fungi. NYBG Press publications are forums for primary research papers on systematic and economic botany of all groups of plants and fungi. Learn more [here](#).

Ordering Information: *Field Guide to the Palms of Belize* (153 pages; hardcover, \$29.95; softcover, \$14.95; and digital, \$9.95) is available in print and digital formats on [Amazon](#) and in print at NYBG Shop at The New York Botanical Garden.

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The New York Botanical Garden is a museum of plants, an educational institution, and a scientific research organization. Founded in 1891, the Botanical Garden is one of the world’s preeminent centers for studying plants at all levels, from the whole organism down to its DNA. Garden scientists conduct fundamental research on plants and fungi globally, as well as on the many relationships between plants and people. A National Historic Landmark, the Garden’s 250-acre site is one of the greatest botanical gardens in the world and the largest in any city in the United States, distinguished by the beauty of its diverse landscape and extensive collections and gardens, as well as by the scope and excellence of its programs in horticulture, education, and plant research and conservation. Learn more: [nybg.org](#)

The New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Boulevard, Bronx, New York 10458

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