

Palms of the Fiji Islands

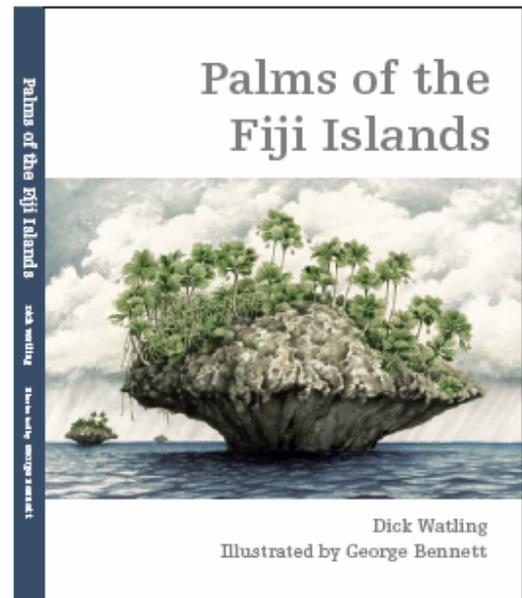
By Dick Watling

Illustrated by George Bennett

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230x190mm. 192 page text; illustrated with original colour paintings of Fiji's palms. Limpbound; colour laminated cover with gatefold flaps, including maps and diagrams.



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The coconut and the Fiji fan palm are by far the best known of Fiji's palms, but both may actually be old introductions to Fiji. This new book, the first ever published on the subject, describes the 31 species of palm that may be found growing wild in Fiji today; 25 of these are considered native and six are introduced.



It is the 25 little-known indigenous palms that are the core subject of this book as they form a distinctive and unique component of the natural heritage of the Fiji

Islands. Fiji's palms are poorly known; indeed, two 'species' are not even scientifically described. They vary in size and form from the delicate 3-4 metre *Balaka seemannii* to the recently described *Hydriastele boumae* which is as tall as a coconut and emerges

Palms of the Fiji Islands has been written for the interested layman and contains chapters on: Fiji and its vegetation; an account of the palm flora – its origin and closest relatives; the most up to date taxonomic classification; species accounts with Fijian ethno-botanical information; distribution maps and, a detailed analysis of conservation issues. Information on the cultivation of Fiji's Palms is provided in a chapter by the late Dick Phillips, Fiji's pioneering palm enthusiast and best known palm horticulturist.

Palms of the Fiji Islands is richly illustrated with fifty eight colour illustrations of all the palms in their natural habitats, and detailed close ups of their fruit. All the illustrations are by the renowned wildlife artist, George Bennett, himself a palm enthusiast and avid cultivator of palms.

from the forest canopy. What we know about these palms should give rise to serious concern.

Indeed over half of Fiji's endemic palms are on the world Red List of endangered plants and are officially categorized by the World Conservation Union as threatened with extinction. The plight of Fiji's palms is a microcosm of the plight of Fiji's forests which are being butchered and burned, year in and year out, with hardly a murmur of public concern. Palms are a very appropriate conservation flagship for the Fiji Islands and also provide a wonderful opportunity for some of the more academic interests of the vulnerability of island floras and extinction processes. It is the author's hope that *Palms of the Fiji Islands* will contribute to a greater knowledge and awareness of Fiji's palms and Fiji's pressing forest and biodiversity conservation issues.



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Phone orders are accepted: +679 3383189. Our normal hours are 9-5 weekdays; an answering machine is in service at other times (Fiji is GMT/UST + 12 hrs).

Mail orders to: Environment Consultants Fiji, Box 2041, Government Buildings, Suva, Fiji.

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