

Message from the President - Tom Broome "A Plea for CAS Funding"

The cycad aulacaspis scale (CAS), also known as the Asian scale, Thai scale, or snow scale, is likely the worst natural plague to kill cycads in the history of cycad cultivation. The first infestation we know of in the United States was in Miami in the mid-1990's. In just one decade, it has spread throughout the southern USA and very recently, even California. CAS has already taken its toll in Hawaii and Costa Rica, and it has now spread to New Zealand. In the last five years, it has reached Guam and Taiwan, where there are natural stands of *Cycas*. There are many other areas of the world, such as India, that are vulnerable to CAS; an outbreak there would destroy other natural populations of cycads, which in this case would include the already endangered *Cycas beddomei*. *Cycas revoluta* is grown all over the world because of its adaptability to various soils and tolerance of temperatures well below freezing. Mankind is responsible for bringing the scale from its natural habitat, where there are predators to keep it in check, and it is man that has spread CAS-infested plants to many parts of the world. Unless something is done about the scale, it will be a serious problem for decades to come.

Anyone who thinks this is not their problem is wrong. Anywhere *Cycas* species are cultivated, there is a good chance that CAS will eventually be there and will destroy most of these landscape plants. Spraying insecticides can keep the scale under control, but only the people who keep up with a spray program will be able to save their cycads. If someone has neighbors within a half-mile radius who do not take care of their plants, the scale will be a constant problem. The only long-term solution will be to use the natural predators present in areas where CAS occurs naturally.

Numerous people all over the world are working on different aspects of this problem, e.g., Dr. Thomas Marler is trying to save cycads in a natural habitat, while Dr. Ronald Cave is studying natural predators that can kill CAS where it persists.

CAS is a serious problem, and the Cycad Society wants to do what it can to help. We have started by donating \$2,500 to Dr. Marler to help him with his fight, but much more is needed to deal with this problem. Jody Haynes has written an article in this issue entitled, "Cycad Aulacaspis Scale: A Global Perspective." In it, he lists several people who are working on different aspects of the CAS problem, and they all need funding.

The Cycad Society is a non-profit organization, but we have not yet received our 501(c)(3) designation. Although we are working on this at the present time, unfortunately, any donations to the Cycad Society are not yet tax deductible. For this reason, we suggest the following two ways to help.

The Cycad Society is starting a CAS Fund. We will identify where funds are needed, and when sufficient money is accumulated, we will make a donation and report in a future newsletter what these funds have been used for. This is an easy method for people who want to give smaller amounts, and cumulatively, these funds will do a lot of good. If you want to donate larger sums of money or give a tax-deductible donation, Jody has listed the different people who can all use funding. Most, if not all, of these people, or the organizations they work for, are currently able to receive tax-deductible donations. In this way, if you want to donate directly to people who are working on a specific aspect of this problem, you can do so.

We encourage everyone to do what they can to help. We would also like to see other cycad-oriented societies and organizations take up the fight to help eradicate CAS and save our cultivated cycads and, more importantly, the natural populations of endangered cycads that are already infested. If you care to donate to the Cycad Society's CAS Fund, please make checks payable to "The Cycad Society" and send them to our treasurer at the address listed below. Make sure to make a notation on your checks mentioning the CAS Fund.

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