

## 51127 to 51141—Continued.

the leaves are long, sword shaped, armed with spines on the margin and keel, differing in color and texture from those of Guam, being glaucous and of great textile strength. Only one sex occurs on the island, so that it must be propagated by cuttings. These take root readily; indeed, a branch lying on the surface will often send out roots which penetrate the ground. The natives frequently plant this species in hedges, which serve the double purpose of defining their boundaries and of furnishing material for cordage and for mats, hats, and bags.

"Dried leaves stripped of the rigid, spiny keel are used either in their simple form or twisted together as lashings for the framework of buildings and for securing thatch to the roof. For making mats, hats, and bags, the leaves are steeped in hot water, scraped, and split into strips of various widths according to the fineness of the fabric desired, dried in the sun, and thoroughly cleaned. Mats are braided with the strips crossing diagonally, as in the mats of the eastern Polynesians, not woven with warp and woof, as are the mats of many of the Micronesians. Some of the hats and small bags are very fine. In the early days the natives of Guam made their sails of *aggak* leaves. The plant was undoubtedly introduced into the island in prehistoric times." (*Saford, Useful Plants of Guam, p. 344.*)

For previous introduction, see S. P. I. No. 44779.

**51139. ROYSTONEA REGIA** (H. B. K.) O. F. Cook. Phœnicaceæ.

(*Oreodoxa regia* H. B. K.)

Cuban royal palm.

The royal palm grows wild throughout the Antilles and also in southern Florida, Mexico, Central America, and in the northern part of South America. It is especially abundant on damp, fertile soil, such as is suitable for tobacco cultivation. In the west of Cuba it is found on land which was formerly cultivated but has since been abandoned. The trunk is often 70 to 85 feet high, with a diameter of nearly 2 feet. The wood is considered unsuitable for constructive purposes, but the external layer of hard wood is much used for walking sticks, stakes, fences, posts, tables, coffee mortars, and the partition walls of houses. The most useful portion of the tree is the *yagua*, or dried leafstalk. The large terminal leaves have clasping leafstalks, 4 to 9 feet long, and as wide as the circumference of the stem. Every three or four weeks a leaf falls; this is damped, flattened by means of weights, and dried. The dried leafstalks are sold per truss and provide the best packing material for export tobacco. The leaf bases supply a fiber from which ropes and string are made. In Cuba *yagua* is also used in the construction of the poorest houses. The terminal bud is edible, but its removal causes the death of the tree. This is one of the most elegant palms for planting in avenues. (Adapted from *La Hacienda, vol. 8, p. 91.*)

For previous introduction, see S. P. I. No. 34747.

**51140. SCHEELEA INSIGNIS** (Mart.) Karst. Phœnicaceæ.

Palm.

A palm with an erect stem, 50 to 60 feet in height, with 15 to 20 smooth, erect, pinnate fronds crowded into a dense crown. The yellowish green, smooth, fleshy, pistillate flowers are sessile on a spadix inclosed in a green spathe. The pale yellowish white, staminate flowers are inconspicuous. (Adapted from *Martius, Historia Naturalis Palmarum, vol. 2, p. 133.*)