



Plantae-palooza V: After Palmageddon 2026

By: Jeremy Evanchesky

The weather forecast leading up to the event left a lot to be desired, with an 80% chance of rain for Friday evening and all day Saturday. Friday night delivered up to an inch of much-needed rainfall to the area. The rain and mild temperatures lead to a lot of fog overnight, adding to the traffic delays for at least one of our vendors. The ground for our booth was a little soggy for our multiple tables and tents, so we put down a 20'x30' tarp the morning of the sale. Once the booth area was walkable, we set up two canopies and four tables to showcase our plants, T-shirts, and business cards to prospective buyers and new members.

The weather forecast could not have been more wrong about Saturday morning through the early afternoon. The sun was out the entire time and temperatures climbed quickly into the mid-80s. Attendance at the sale was high, both among local plant enthusiasts and our society members. Members from as far away as Jacksonville and gardeners from as far away as Miami attended the sale and made their way in and out of the booth for various plants and participated in discussions.

Hollis Gardens, much like Leu Gardens, is a bellwether garden for the surrounding area. If it will not survive at Hollis Gardens, it is unlikely to survive in Lakeland. This year, a lot of the brown foliage had to be removed from the garden before the sale in a few short weeks. Across the promenade and between the parking garage and the garden receiving area, *Archontophoenix* species with little or no damage provided a stark contrast to those that were in the open areas of the garden exposed to 40-mph winds and temperatures as low as 25F.

One thread of reasoning would suggest that shoppers would stop by the booth demanding palms that could survive a sub-25F freeze. To our astonishment, several shoppers requested the same crownshaft palms like *Archontophoenix tuckeri* that were currently damaged and recovering in their gardens. Lakeland gardeners are a resilient bunch.

The sale kept everyone busy with a constant stream of customers and members until roughly 1pm. At that point, we were able to take a few breaks to walk around and check out the other vendor booths. The various plant societies and families like orchids, camelias, cacti and succulents were well represented, with most of our booths nearly empty by the end of the day. Cleanup time at 3pm was made easier with help from the Hollis staff and the relatively low amount of leftover inventory.

The first sale of the year is now in the books, and we encourage everyone to check out the dates for our Spring Meeting and other sales as we progress from the end of February through June!

Setting up the booth is always the hardest part. (Next 2 photos)



The hard work pays off when you have happy customers.



It didn't take long for the pickings at the booth to get slim.



When enough space is free, it's time to reorganize the bench.



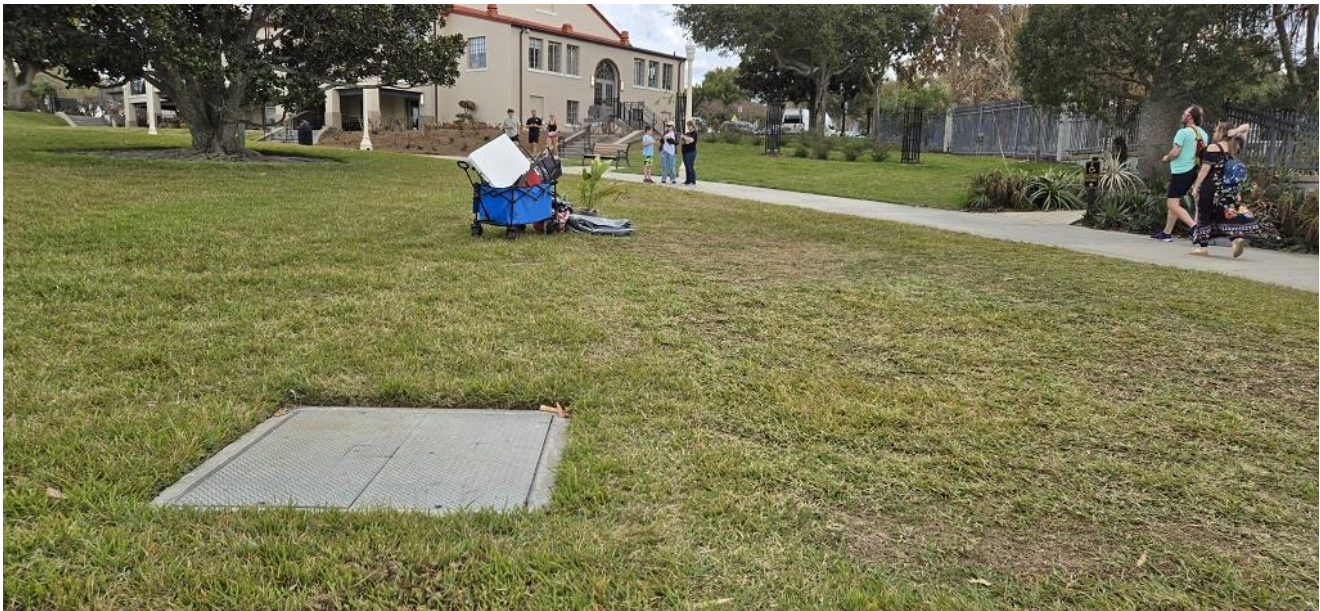
The reorganization pays off as another customer stops by and fills their wagon full of plants.



It's fun, but it's hard work. Time for a break.



It ends the way it starts – with a cart full of supplies and a few plants.



Links:

Plantae-palooza 2026:

<https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/92139-plantae%E2%80%93palooza-garden-festival-2026/>

Spring 2026 Meeting:

<https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/92909-central-florida-palm-cycad-society-spring-2026-meeting/>

Upcoming Events and Sales:

- [Leu Gardens Spring Plant Sale](#)
- [SJBGNP Spring Fling and Plant Sale](#)
- [Spring Fever in the Garden](#)
- [GreenThumb Festival](#)
- **CFPACS Spring Sale at SJBGNP – Hastings, FL – May 2nd**

BONUS: A very satisfied customer shows off their haul after returning home.

