



## Spring Meeting 2026: More in Moore Haven

By: Jeremy Evanchesky

After the worst winter since at least 2010, it felt great to be out on a sunny and warm March day. Attendees from as far away as Jacksonville made the trip to the southern third of the peninsula to enjoy an informative tour, compare notes on damage in their own gardens and observations as they traversed the state, and share a meal together before our auction. On my own way down, the temperatures swung from mid-50s at Starbucks in Lakeland, to mid-40s on Avon Park Cutoff Rd, and then back into the 50s by Sebring.

Upon arrival, attendees were guided to the designated spots to drop off auction plants, stored their perishable sides and desserts, and park their vehicles. Once everyone had gathered at the meeting, the tour began in earnest and our host, Chip Jones, proceeded to guide us through the garden and make us all a little smarter than we were before the meeting. Of special interest were the mountains that were created from cut stone and the mutations garden full of plants that exhibited abnormal features for their species.

Damage in the garden seemed to be sporadic and site dependent. The nursery area was slightly cooler than the Moore Haven Lock weather station further east and closer to Lake Okeechobee. Most of the palms and cycads were growing well in spite of any setbacks experienced due to our inordinately cold winter. There were plenty of black racers out sunning themselves on the copious amounts of stone that Chip has incorporated into his garden and nursery.

At the conclusion of the tour, a buffet-style lunch was set up in a shaded area we also used for the auction. Our usual BBQ spot let us know they could not fill our order roughly 48 hours before the meeting, so we grabbed some sliced brisket and macaroni and cheese from Mission BBQ in Lakeland for those who had their taste buds ready for the barbecue lunch.

Chip was kind enough to put several rare cycads in the auction, and interest was high among bidders. Several palms of interest, including a golden form of *Livistona benthamii* also made an appearance. Dave and Geri Prall brought orchids and several other accent plants for those of us who wanted to fill out the garden with plants that didn't require a large ground-level footprint. Bidding wars even coaxed Maryann to inflation-adjust her maximum bid limit to compete with Jason and Pete.

With the auction complete, Chip spent hours pulling orders for our membership, most of which left with full truckloads of plants. Folks were encouraged to take food and drinks with them as they departed for the ride home and were advised that additional information concerning the remaining meetings and events for the year would be sent in an upcoming communication. Check our sales events at the bottom of this recap and in the Events section of our website for sales and other events as well. Thank you to everyone who made the meeting a wonderful experience!



*The group gathers for the start of the tour.*



*The driveway border has tons of interesting plants.*



*There's no way to tell how many cycads are on the property.*



*The elevated calcareous beds lend themselves well to xeriscaping. (Above 2 photos)*



*It's lonely at the top.*



*Just in case anyone forgot what a totally green landscape looked like...*

## Links:

### Upcoming Events and Sales:

- [Spring Fever in the Garden](#)
- [USF Spring Plant Festival](#)
- [GreenThumb Festival](#)
- [CFPACS Spring Sale at SJBGNP – Hastings, FL – May 2<sup>nd</sup>](#)

### Spring 2026 Meeting Thread:

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

**Summer + Fall Meetings 2026:** *At the time of print, we are rescheduling and reshuffling the sites for these meetings due to damage to our previously scheduled hosts' gardens. Look for updates via email and on PalmTalk and Facebook.*

**February 2026 Freeze Map:** <http://tinyurl.com/4xyx52p5>

### Winter 2025-2026 Weather and Damage Discussions:

- **Weather:**
  - <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/91751-2025-2026-florida-winter/>
  - <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/92674-historic-east-florida-freeze-feb-2026-screen-shots/>
  - <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/79400-for-some-florida-drought-is-getting-very-extreme/>
- **Damage:**
  - <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/92659-2026-02-florida-palmageddon-observations-and-damage-photo-thread/>
  - <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/92723-2026-02-documenting-freeze-damage-in-south-brevard/>
  - <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/92792-2026-02-february-2026-cold-snap-in-cape-coral-florida/>
  - <https://www.palmtalk.org/forum/topic/92884-2026-02-preliminary-cold-damage-to-my-palms-after-23f-central-florida/>