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# Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



## SABAL PALM, OUR STATE TREE, GROWS THROUGHOUT FLORIDA

TALLAHASSEE --- The Sabal Palm, also known as Cabbage Palm, is Florida's official State Tree. And the reasons are summed up in romantic language in the 1953 legislative bill which designated the tree:

"...This tree with its massive tapering trunk and its crown of dark green leaves that whisper a song of tropic beauty and peace, is among our most exquisite splendors of nature with which our State is so abundantly blessed by God and ... the pm is a symbol of our tropical climate to our frozen neighbors of the north..."

The selection was not unopposed. There was a strong bid by supporters of the slash pine, a big industry in Florida. And even the palm-lovers were divided, some fought for the royal palm.

The Florida Federation of Garden Clubs prevailed with its position that the sabal palm, or palmetto, grows all over the state. The State Seal, which dates back to 1868, features a stately Sabal.

What might be considered the "official" official State Tree is a thriving sabal palmetto on the south side of the State Capitol in Tallahassee (see photo). A marker at the foot is dedicated to the memory of Gov. Dan McCarty, who signed the bill designating the Sabal Palmetto as Florida State Tree on June 11, 1953. The Governor died in office after having served only nine months.

The State Department of Agriculture describes the Sabal as the hardiest of our native palms, reaching heights of 80 feet. Tolerant of a wide variety of soil types, salt spray and brackish water, the cabbage palm well deserves its universal popularity. The leaves are fan-shaped and shiny, deep green in color. In pioneer days, the Sabal furnished food and shelter.

