ABSTRACT: Three native palms are dominant features of the pine rocklands understory of peninsular southern Florida: sabal palm (Sabal palmetto), saw palmetto (Serenoa repens), and silver palm (Coccothrinax argentata). Despite the abundance of these three palm species, the breeding system and pollination mechanisms need further clarification. We used controlled hand-pollination experiments to investigate the breeding systems of these three species. We also observed and captured floral visitors, as well as examined their bodies for pollen, to determine the pollinator assemblages. Our experiments demonstrated that all three palms are self-compatible, and some flowers may set fruit with no manipulation. Natural (open) pollination treatments yielded more fruit than either cross- or self-pollination, indicating no shortage of pollination and suggesting that multiple visits by many pollinators enhances fruit set. We observed a wider variety of visitors (Coleoptera, Diptera, Hymenoptera, Lepidoptera) to flowers of sabal and saw palmetto, as they offer both nectar and pollen. On flowers of silver palm, we observed only pollen-collecting bees. We found evidence of palm flower specialists in only two cases: Xylocopa micans bees carried only Coccothrinax pollen and Anartia jatrophae butterflies carried only Sabal pollen. All other visitors appeared to be generalists as they carried pollen from multiple plant species. These results highlight the importance of subcanopy palms in the pine rocklands ecosystem as they provide floral rewards for a wide array of insects that are beneficial for other plants of this imperiled habitat.

Index terms: flowers, insects, palms, pine rocklands, pollination

INTRODUCTION

Palms are dominant and important components of the subtropical pine rocklands and other habitats in Florida (Brown 1973, 1976; Zona 1997; Carrington et al. 2001, 2003; Carrington and Mullahey 2006). Palm nectar and pollen are important food resources for insects; other animals, including black bears (Ursus americanus Pallas), small mammals, and birds (Zona 1997), consume palm fruits. Humans harvest honey from honeybees foraging on these palms and collect the fruits of saw palmetto for medicinal purposes (Bennett and Hicklin 1998). Three sympatric palm species (sabal palm [Sabal palmetto (Walt.) Lodd. ex J.A. & J.H. Schultes], saw palmetto [Serenoa repens (W.Bartram) Small], and silver palm [Coccothrinax argentata (Jacq.) L.H.Bailey]) occur in the imperiled pine rocklands of southern peninsular Florida (Figure 1), a habitat greatly reduced in its extent by human development, with only small habitat fragments remaining (Possley et al. 2008).

Pine rocklands are fire-successional habitats with a canopy of slash pine (Pinus elliottii Engelm. var. densa Little & Dorman) over a subcanopy of palms and hardwoods and a diverse understory of forbs and grasses (Snyder et al. 1990; FNAI 2010). Without fire, hardwoods grow up and overtake the pines to become the climax community of this highest, driest, limestone rocky ground, the hardwood hammock. In southern Florida, pine rocklands occur both on the mainland along the Miami Rock Ridge and in the Lower Keys. The same palm species may be encountered in both pine rockland locations, but Keys pine rocklands have additional palm species abundant (Sah et al. 2006).

More than any other habitat in south Florida, pine rocklands have been targeted for human economic development due to their relatively high elevation (2–7 m above sea level; Snyder et al. 1990; Koptur 2006). As a consequence, this habitat is considered imperiled and a number of its native species are listed as threatened and endangered by state and federal agencies (Gann et al. 2002, 2009; Possley et al. 2008).

The most distinctive members of the understory of subtropical south Florida pine rocklands are palms. They are often the largest plants, overtaken in size only by sparsely dispersed South Florida slash pine. The large leaves of palms grow from a central stem, rather than on woody branches, as is the case for most other understory shrubs. In pine rocklands, palms play a role in nearly every plant/animal interaction, for they are ubiquitous, determining the structure of shade and open areas, as well as providing resources for pollinators and other herbivores with their flowers, leaves, and fruits. Palm leaves provide not only shade for resting animals (such as Key deer [Odocoileus virginianus clavium Barbour & Allen]; B. Harris, pers.,
comm.), but ample combustible fuel for the fires that are essential to maintain the open character of pine rockland habitat (Cooley 2004; Sah et al. 2006). Palms are fire-adapted and normally leaf out soon after a burn, flowering more exuberantly than when the area is unburned (Gunderson et al. 1983). Of the three native species occurring together at most pine rockland sites, two (sabal palm and saw palmetto) are widespread and abundant, and the third (silver palm) is less common but locally abundant at certain sites (Figure 1).

Co-blooming, sympatric species may either compete for pollinators (Stiles 1977; Waser 1978) or share pollinators (Koptur 1983; Moeller 2004). The benefits of sharing may be most important for rare plant species (Schemske 1981; Rathcke and Lacey 1985), which may be able to attract more pollinators when they bloom simultaneously with other species that attract the same visitors (Thomson 1978; Feinsinger et al. 1986; Geber and Moeller 2006). When there is competition for visitors, especially among co-blooming abundant species, many factors involving the dispersal and receipt of pollen could limit fruit set, thereby affecting plant fitness (Mitchell et al. 2009). In patches of abundant, co-blooming species, the number and quality of pollinator visits affect both seed production (female fitness) and seed siring (male fitness). The negative effects of pollinator competition include fewer flower visitations (Campbell 1985) and less conspecific pollen deposition because pollinators groom themselves between visits to other species (Flanagan et al. 2009). Foreign pollen can also interfere with germination of conspecific pollen due to stigma clogging (Waser 1978; Waser and Fugate 1986) or inhibition of pollen germination and fertilization success (Galen and Gregory 1989).

Most previous studies of pollination in pine rocklands have focused on wildflowers or other showy dicotyledonous flowering plants (Pascarella et al. 2001; Liu and Koptur 2003; Koptur 2006; Cardel and Koptur 2010; Linares and Koptur 2010; Downing and Liu 2013). Wildflowers may receive few or no visits when they are adjacent to blooming sabal palms or saw palmettos (Pinto-Torres and Koptur 2009). In the present study, we focused on sabal palm and saw palmetto, along with the less common silver palm, comparing the pollination requirements for fruit set and the floral visitors to each species.

By looking at the plants that make up the “backdrop” for other flowering plants in the pine rockland, we hoped to learn more about these common palms with large, attractive inflorescences, especially the details of their own floral biology, breeding systems, and pollinators. In elucidating what insect visitors are supported by the floral resources that native palms provide, we could learn if and how important they are to overall conservation of plant/animal interactions and ecosystem services of the pine rockland community.

We sought to learn more about their floral morphology and rewards, interactions with floral visitors, and the extent to which they depend upon flower visitors for pollination. We asked if palm flowers need visitors to set fruit, if they can set fruit with their own pollen, and to what extent these three palm species share pollinators with one another and with other sympatric flowering plants of Florida pine rocklands. For the
first time, we consider the implications of their sympatry in their pollination ecology, and discuss potential effects on the other species in the habitat. Two of the three species have received detailed attention by researchers in other parts of their range, so our study adds information about their biology in a new geographic location.

METHODS

Study Sites

We conducted the fieldwork from February through May 2008 at one of the larger remaining fragments of pine rockland, the Navy Wells Preserve (1.43 km²; UTM coordinates: easting 549776, northing 2813432). Additional pollinator observations were made at Larry and Penny Thompson Park (1.09 km²; UTM easting 559449, northing 2831668). We chose Navy Wells for our experiments since a fire the previous year had incited luxuriant regrowth and blooming of understory plants, wildflowers, and palms; the study area in Larry and Penny was similarly recently burned.

Study Species

Sabal palmetto, Serenoa repens, and Coccothrinax argentata are members of the palm subfamily Coryphoideae. Sabal is placed in the tribe Sabaleae; Serenoa and Coccothrinax are in the tribe Cryosophiloeae (Dransfield et al. 2008). Flowers of these species are hermaphroditic and are borne on the surface of the rachillae (flower-bearing branches of the inflorescence), rather than sunken in pits, as they are in some other Coryphoideae. Hermaphroditic flowers with many stamens may attract pollen-collecting insects, but the presence of nectaries in both Sabal and Serenoa suggests insect visitors also seek nectar rewards (Silverbauer-Gottsberger 1990).

Sabal palm is the state tree of Florida, occurring abundantly on rockland substrates. Mature plants are 1–2.5 m in height at our study sites. Leaves are distinctively costapalmate, with a single long fiber hanging off each leaflet margin (often collected by birds as nesting material). The large inflorescences develop over weeks, with individual buds evident long before numerous, small flowers open. Sabal species that have been studied have pre-dawn flower opening with production of strong, fragrant odor (Brown 1976; Zona 1987). Brown (1976) found that flowers are protogynous, nectar is produced at the base of the ovary, and bees and flies visit before dawn. Coleoptera and Lepidoptera visit flowers nocturnally, when the flowers are withered (Brown 1976). In a study of flower-visiting Hymenoptera of the Everglades, Sabal palmetto was one of two species in Everglades habitats that displayed the greatest species richness of non-apoecial floral visitors as well as the greatest number of bee species (Pascarella et al. 2001). Those authors also noted that aggregations of the beetle Trigonopeltastes delta (Forster) were attracted to the large inflorescences of sabal palms. Fruits are round, single-seeded berries less than 1 cm in diameter, dark purple to black in color when mature; seeds are shiny and brown (Zona 1990).

Saw palmetto has both prostrate and upright stems. At our study sites, flowering plants are usually less than 1-m tall. The petiole edges of the fan-shaped leaves have saw-like teeth, giving the plant its common name. Flowers are small but numerous, have a strong, sweet fragrance, and produce viscous nectar. Inflorescences develop similarly to those of sabal palm, flowering both after fire in the winter (dry) or the growing (wet) season, but fruiting better with less frequent fire (Carrington and Mullahey 2006). Serenoa repens is fire-resistant and increases in abundance with frequency of fires. The greatest flowering is apparent on plants the first year following a fire (Carrington and Mullahey 2013). Hand-pollination experiments by Carrington et al. (2003) demonstrated that saw palmetto flowers set more fruit with insect visitation than without. More than 300 species of insects were observed to visit the flowers (Deyrup and Deyrup 2012; Deyrup 2016). Carrington et al. (2003) reported that the small but numerous flowers last more than one day. Fruits are drupes with a fragile endocarp, up to 2-cm long, bluish black in color and juicy when ripe (Long and Lakela 1971; Zona 1997).

Silver palm is a long-lived, slow-growing palm. Leaves are silvery underneath, giving this species its common name. Although plants flower at less than 1-m high, some individuals reach a height of 2 m or more at our study sites. Two morphotypes have been identified: the shorter, northern morph growing on the mainland (including our sites) and the taller, southern morph growing in the Florida Keys (Davis et al. 2007). Unlike the inflorescences of Sabal palmetto and Serenoa repens, the inflorescence of C. argentata opens suddenly, the rachillae expanding beyond the sheathing bracts to expose all the flowers in anthesis at once. Flowers are small and white, with 7–12 twisted stamens and one carpel. Described as anemophilous (Uhl and Moore 1977; Henderson 1986; Zona 1997), our observations and experiments demonstrated that insects also effectively pollinate the flowers (Khorsand Rosa and Koptur 2009). Silver palm fruits are single-seeded berries, less than 1 cm in diameter, from light purple to black, rarely pink or white, with thick pulp (Long and Lakela 1971; Zona 1997).

Note that, from this point onward, we will refer to the three species by their generic names, for two reasons: to avoid confusion as two genera begin with the same letter, and to use Latin rather than common names to facilitate international understanding.

Controlled Hand-polllination Experiments

We monitored inflorescences to determine how buds grew over time and which buds were likely to open soon so we could bag appropriate inflorescences. We bagged inflorescences (or portions of the inflorescence) using very fine nylon mesh bags with threads less than 0.1-mm apart (breathable, but impenetrable by floral visitors) prior to flower bud opening, so that we protected the newly opened flowers from any animal visits.

We conducted hand-pollinations on Sabal and Serenoa in the early morning hours, after anthers had dehisced. We collected pollen from newly opened flowers by putting anthers in glassine envelopes, and then applied the pollen to receptive stigmas one
Floral Visitors

We watched different individuals for 10-minute observation periods for a total of 120 person-minutes (twelve 10-minute observation periods) for each species of palm, as well as for the abundantly flowering Metopium toxiferum (L.) Krug & Urb. (Anacardiaceae) and other wildflowers. We recorded the number of individuals of each visitor type (not species) during every observation period, categorizing the visitors as Coleoptera, Diptera, Hymenoptera (subdivided as bees and wasps), and Lepidoptera. After the observation periods, representatives of each visitor taxon were caught (three to five individuals) and vouchers made for species determination, and to examine the bodies for pollen. We sampled the bodies under a dissecting microscope using insect pins to remove pollen grains from insects and put the pollen collected into fuchsin gel on slides (Dafni et al. 2005). We then compared pollen on the slides with pollen in our reference collection, made from the palms being studied, as well as the other flowering species of the pine rockland. Insect voucher specimens are held in the Koptur lab collection for eventual deposition in the Florida Arthropod Collection at the Florida Museum of Natural History.

RESULTS

Controlled Hand-pollination Experiments

Mean fruit set was low in all Sabal and Serenoa treatments (1–3%), with the Kruskal–Wallis test not significant among all treatments (df = 3, P > 0.05) and Mann–Whitney U also not significant between any pairwise comparison (Figure 2). For Coccothrinax, bagged flowers with no visitors displayed little fruit set (7%) compared with those open to visitors (~80%), a highly significant difference with the Mann–Whitney test (U = 6.0, P < 0.0001).

Floral Visitors

We observed at least 30 species of arthropods associated with flowers of the three palm species: 27 floral visitors (Table 1), and 3 floral herbivores (Table 2). Two of the herbivorous insects are generalist feeders, known to eat the leaves and flowers of other species in this habitat (Figure 3). Pachnaeus litus (Germar), citrus root weevil, feeds on leaves and flowers of cultivated citrus and other fruit trees, as well as on leaves of native plants (Peña et al. 2003; Koptur et al. 2015). Caterpillars of the echo moth have been observed eating a wide array of pine rockland plants, from gymnosperms ( Zamia pumila L.; Negron-Ortiz and Gorchov 2000) to wildflowers (Cardel and Koptur 2010). Only the cabbage palm caterpillar is somewhat specialized on palms, though not as specialized as its name might imply, as it was also found on saw palmetto and silver palm in our study. Four species of floral visitors were observed on all three palms: love bugs ( Plectia nearctica Hardy), honeybees ( Apis mellifera L.), graceful twig ants ( Pseudomyrmex gracilis Fabricius), and the Georgian leafcutter bee ( Megachile georgica Cresson). At least 10 species were observed visiting only Sabal and Serenoa flowers (and not Coccothrinax), including six bees, two beetles, a wasp, and a moth; at least 16 species were shared between the two species (Table 1). Only one species was observed uniquely on Coccothrinax flowers in our study: the carpenter bee, Xylocopa micans Lepeltier (Figure 4). We found three species of bees collecting pollen from Coccothrinax.
All visitors collected from palm inflorescences had palm pollen on their bodies. It was common to find Hymenoptera and Lepidoptera with both palm and wildflower pollen on their bodies. Many individuals had loads with *Sabal*, *Serenoa*, and one or more species of wildflower pollen, including *Ruellia succulenta* (J.F.Gmel.) Steud., *Angadenia berteroi* (A. DC.) Miers, *Centrosema virginianum* (L.) Benth., and *Solidago stricta* Aiton. The most common non-palm pollen observed on visitors was that of a woody species abundant at the sites, *Metopium toxiferum* (L.) Krug & Urb. (poisonwood). The flowers of this species glisten with nectar and evidently attract a wide variety of insects. Visitors were likely collecting nectar from the palms and non-palms alike, though it is possible that some were collecting pollen from wildflowers and poisonwood as well. *Coccothrinax* pollen is smaller than *Sabal* and *Serenoa* pollen (Figure 6), and some of the bees had nearly pure loads of *Coccothrinax* pollen after visiting its flowers. As *Coccothrinax* flowers offer no nectar, we can be sure that the purpose of their visits was to collect pollen. It was not possible for us to distinguish *Sabal* pollen from that of *Serenoa* using our simple fuchsin gel technique, as they are quite similar in size and shape.

**DISCUSSION**

Henderson (1986) and Barfod et al. (2011) showed that this subfamily of palms displays a diversity of pollination syndromes: beetle pollinated (with persistent bracts covering the rachillae at anthesis) and bee pollinated (without persistent bracts). *Sabal*, *Serenoa*, and *Coccothrinax* do not have persistent bracts, falling into the bee-pollinated category, according to those authors. The flowers of the three pine rockland palms received many kinds of insect visitors, including butterflies, moths, flies, and beetles, as well as bees. While bees account for more than half of the visits, these other insects likely provide pollination services as well.

Our observations demonstrate that palms of the pine rocklands share many floral visitors. Pollinator sharing may not be disadvantageous to any one species if flowers and visitors are numerous. Petit (2011) saw no detrimental effects of co-blooming in columnar cacti in Curacao, and natural pollination yielded more fruit than hand-pollinations in her experiments. In tropical dry forests of Costa Rica, flowering peaks in the dry season, where flowers produced on mostly leafless trees easily attract visitors looking for water and sugars provided by nectar, and most trees receive ample pollination (Frankie et al. 1974). Though seasonality in south Florida is not as dramatic, during the later months of the dry season in the pine rocklands, the flowering palms provide abundant resources of nectar and pollen at a time most other flowering plants are also in bloom. Nevertheless, we saw neither evidence of reduced fitness from pollinator sharing, nor evidence that other plants in bloom (poisonwood, wildflowers, etc.) had any
Table 1. Flower visitors to inflorescences of three pine rockland palm species, as well as to the flowers of poisonwood (Metopium toxiferum) and to other common wildflowers at two pine rockland sites in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flower visitor Latin name / common name</th>
<th>Visitor order/family</th>
<th>Coccothrinax argentata</th>
<th>Sabal palmetto</th>
<th>Serenoa repens</th>
<th>Metopium toxiferum</th>
<th>Other wildflowers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Euphoria sepulchralis (Fabricius) / flower beetle</td>
<td>Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trigonopeltastes delta (Förster) / Delta flower scarab</td>
<td>Coleoptera/Scarabaeida</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plecia nearctica Hardy / Love bugs</td>
<td>Diptera/Bibionidae</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flies – spp. undetermined</td>
<td>Diptera</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Apis mellifera L. / honey bee</td>
<td>Hymenoptera/Apidae</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Augochlora pura Cockerell ssp. mosieri</td>
<td>Hymenoptera/Halictidae</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Augochlorella gratiosa Smith</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Augochloropsis anonya Cockerell</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Camponotus trifasciata Saussure</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camponotus floridanus (Buckley) / carpenter ant</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camponotus rasilis Wheeler</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centris errans Fox</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dialictus tegularis (Robertson)</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Dianthidium curvatum Smith</td>
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<td>Halictus ligatus Say</td>
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<tr>
<td>Megachile albitarsis Cresson</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Megachile georgica Cresson</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Megachile pruina pruina Smith</td>
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<td>Melissodes communis Cresson</td>
<td>Hymenoptera/Anthophoridae</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pachodynerus erymnis (Lepeletier)</td>
<td>Hymenoptera/Vespidae</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pseudomyrmex gracilis Fabricius</td>
<td>Hymenoptera/Formicidae</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xylocopa micans Lepeletier / carpenter bee</td>
<td>Hymenoptera/Apidae</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Vespid wasps sp. undet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anartia jatrophae L. / white peacock butterfly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eurema dina (Poey) / Dina yellow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pseudocharis minima (Grote)</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syntomeida ipomoeae Harris / yellow banded wasp moth</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utetheisa bella (L.) / Bella moth</td>
<td>Lepidoptera/Arctiidae</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
detrimental effect on the palms.

Interspecific competition can reduce fruit set in some situations and can reduce the amount of outcrossing, lowering seed quality in species as a direct result of competition (Bell et al. 2005). There is potential for competition among the palms for pollinators, but during our observation periods, there were numerous visitors on all inflorescences. We found no evidence for pollen limitation in *Sabal* and *Serenoa*, given the lack of statistical difference in fruit set between the treatment and control. We were surprised with the very low fruit set we observed in all treatments and our controls, but perhaps the temperatures or rainfall during our study had some negative effects. It may simply be that with the enormous numbers of flowers in their inflorescences, the palms still make quite a lot of fruit even with a relatively small proportion of their flowers setting fruit. The rates of natural self- vs. cross-pollination, as well as the relative success of fruits derived from self- vs. cross-pollination, merit further investigation.

All of the palm species investigated appear to be self-compatible, as fruit from self-pollinations was set in both *Sabal* and *Serenoa*, and a small number of fruit was set in flowers that were simply bagged in *Coccothrinax*. Studying Bromeliaceae in Brazil, Matallana et al. (2010) suggested that self-pollination may function as a reproductive isolating mechanism among co-blooming, sympatric species, facilitating fertilization by conspecific and identical individuals. The palms, belonging to separate genera, are not known to hybridize and no intergeneric hybrids are known between any of these species. It is more likely that genetic barriers to hybridization, rather than extensive self-pollination, are the reproductive isolating mechanisms at play.

Sympatric related species may have displaced flowering periods, as in bat-polinated *Parkia* spp. in Amazonian Brazil (Hopkins 1984), perhaps to reduce competition. Alternatively, related species may open their flowers at different times of the day, minimizing interference with one another, as in *Acacia* spp. in Africa (Stone et al. 1998) and in seasonal tropical forests of Mexico (Raine et al. 2007) or *Inga* spp. in cloud forests of Costa Rica (Koptur 1983). Such separation of flowering times was not observed in these palms of pine rocklands, as they all bloomed prolifically and simultaneously at our study sites.

In some situations, sympatric related species share pollinators simultaneously, but deposit pollen on different parts of the pollinator’s bodies. In species of *Trichostema* (Lamiaceae), pollen is deposited on a bee’s abdomen or thorax, dorsal or ventral surface, depending on the size of the bee and the way it visits the flowers of each species, resulting in spatial partitioning of pollen types on the pollinators’ bodies (Spira 1980). Likewise, co-blooming *Helleborus* (Ranunculaceae) species in Italy have different floral forms and bees (*Bombus* spp.) visit them in different ways, resulting in specialized placement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Floral herbivore</th>
<th>Order/family</th>
<th><em>Coccothrinax argentata</em></th>
<th><em>Sabal palmetto</em></th>
<th><em>Serenoa repens</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Pachnaeus litus</em> (Germar) – citrus root weevil</td>
<td>Coleoptera/ Curculionidae</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Seirarctica echo</em> (J.E. Smith) – echo moth caterpillars</td>
<td>Lepidoptera/ Arctiidae</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Litoprosopus futilis</em> Grote &amp; Robinson – cabbage palm</td>
<td>Lepidoptera/ Noctuidae</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Floral herbivores occurring on all three palm species (left to right): *Seirarctica echo* – echo moth caterpillars (Lepidoptera/ Arctiidae); *Pachnaeus litus* – citrus root weevil (Coleoptera/Curculionidae); and damage by *Litoprosopus futilis* Grote & Robinson – cabbage palm caterpillar (Lepidoptera/ Noctuidae) shown here on saw palmetto, *Serenoa repens*. 
of pollen loads (Vesprini and Pacini 2010). The small, radially symmetric flowers of similar size in our study species do not provide the morphological features that would allow this sort of differentiation in pollen placement; indeed, pollen loads on the bodies of most visitors were mixed.

Shared pollinators may restrict their visits to one species or another due to individual preferences, as is the case with oligolectic bees (e.g., *Perdita* specializing in Boraginaceae; Portman et al. 2016), or due to territoriality restricting pollinator movement, as in hummingbirds and Andean Solanaceae (Smith et al. 2008). Other floral visitors may prefer to visit only one species of flower at a time (displaying floral constancy). The fact that we observed only one type of pollen on some of the collected visitors suggests that one or more of these restrictions might be the case for certain taxa, such as *Xylocopa* bees visiting only *Coccothrinax*. The flowering strategy of *Coccothrinax* (many flowers, all opening at once) is most effective when pollinator loyalty is high; the abundance of their pollen may encourage short-term specialization by *Xylocopa* bees, often seen to be generalists, visiting many other kinds of flowers.

As human population has increased in southern Florida, the pine rockland habitat has become increasingly fragmented (Snyder et al. 1990; Koptur 2006; Barrios et al. 2011). Although it is a challenge to have fires in small parcels of fragmented pine rockland habitat, fire is important in controlling overgrowth of both native and exotic hardwoods (Possley et al. 2014). A healthy pine rockland flora depends on periodic fires, and it is evident that without these disturbances many endemic species decline in abundance (O’Brien 1998; Liu et al. 2005; Barrios et al. 2011; Barrios et al. 2016; Possley et al. 2016). Like many other perennial species in this fire-succesional habitat, palms survive and resprout vigorously, with growth and flowering enhanced by nutrients released from the burned vegetation after periodic fires (Cooley 2004; Sah et al. 2006).

Palms are certainly important in other southern ecosystems; Abrahamson (2016) calls palmettos growing in the sandy soils of the scrub habitat “foundation species,” as they play a major role in structuring the community. In pine rocklands, our observations support their role as foundation species of the understory, with a large influence on the many animals with which they associate, that are in turn associated with many other plant species in this diverse habitat.

Our study demonstrates (as has work by many others) the important role that flowering palms play in attracting and sustaining a panoply of visitors. The three palms found in pine rocklands of peninsular south.
Florida exhibit extended flowering seasons, and in all species the individuals of the population do not flower synchronously, providing a relatively constant source of pollen and nectar for insects of the pine rocklands. Further work examining the impact of palm flowering on pollination of flowers of other pine rockland plant species may reveal both positive and negative effects.

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