



# The Drifting Seed

May, 2010 Vol. 16, No. 1

## THE DRIFTING SEED

A triannual newsletter covering seeds and fruits dispersed by tropical currents  
and the people who collect and study them.

Available on the World Wide Web at [www.seabean.com](http://www.seabean.com).

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The 15th Annual International Sea Bean Symposium will be held at the Cocoa Beach Public Library,  
October 22nd-23rd, 2010.

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## Fourteenth Annual International Sea Bean Symposium

October 16 -17, 2009, Cocoa Beach, Florida

by Margie Mitchell, [margiemitchell@cfl.rr.com](mailto:margiemitchell@cfl.rr.com)

“Flotsametrics.” What is it? Well, for starters it’s the title of keynote speaker Dr. Curt Ebbesmeyer’s new book: *Flotsametrics and the Floating World: How One Man’s Obsession with Runaway Sneakers and Rubber Ducks Revolutionized Ocean Science*. It was also the theme of the 2009 symposium. But what does it really mean? When David McRee posed the question to Curt in an interview, Curt said:

“Flotsametrics is a term that Jim Ingraham and I coined twenty years ago. It’s the metrics of everything that floats. It’s trying to understand what floats on the surface, which has not really been done before. My view is that everything that floats on the ocean has a story to tell. It just happens to be deaf and mute, so you have to strangle its little neck to get its story out.”

And there you have it. Curt’s book tells the hidden stories of many of those floaters, with a good mix of his own life story as an ocean floater thrown in. If you weren’t at the symposium to hear all about it, pick up a copy and read about snarks, sneakers, garbage patches, and the music of the gyres. Even if you were at the symposium, be sure to read this fascinating book. Learn more at the [www.flotsametrics.com](http://www.flotsametrics.com) website.

Ed Perry led off the symposium on Friday morning with his slide show for beginning beachwalkers, giving us a good look at all the interesting things we can expect to find on local beaches here in Brevard County, Florida, USA.

Friday afternoon we heard about the Sea Turtle Preservation Society’s new Sea Turtle Emergency Response program from Ann Zscheile. STERP focuses on helping young turtles who wash back onto our beaches from their ocean nursery in the sargassum, during the same type of wind conditions that bring us seabean. The program depends on volunteer beachcombers to hunt for these tiny creatures in the beached seaweed which can at times be as much as a couple of feet thick. Ann also showed an amazing video of two sea turtle nests hatching as the sand covering them washed away in hurricane-driven surf. Seeing those little guys running for the water with huge waves crashing around them really gave the audience an appreciation for how tough it is to be a sea turtle hatchling. We hope some new STERP volunteers signed up after seeing Ann’s presentation.

Saturday afternoon Blair Witherington’s talk “A Seabean’s Journey,” played to a packed house. The audience was not disappointed. The hamburger bean in question began its life when a bat pollinated a plant in the rain forest of Colombia. After reaching maturity, it fell from the plant and floated down the Rio Magdalena to the Caribbean. Blair produced amazing (or should I say apocryphal?) photographic evidence of our little traveler floating with a Portuguese man-o-war, a leatherback sea turtle, and a whale shark, among other adventures, as it made its way between the Yucatan and Cuba, into the Gulf of Mexico loop current, and eventually into the Gulf Stream, which finally brought it alongside the east coast of Florida. Then it needed only a good push from an east wind to meet its ultimate destiny as a treasured find by a happy beachcomber. It looked a lot like a hamburger bean I found in Cocoa Beach. More than likely the same one, I’m thinking.

The Odd Bean contest this year stayed true to its name. There were some VERY odd beans on the contest table. The judges had a tough time choosing. Winners were:

- Oddest Seaheart: Jacqueline Donahue. It's very hard to describe this seaheart, but it looked a lot more like a computer mouse than a heart.
- Oddest Hamburger: Mike Burnett (diamond-shaped).
- Oddest Nickarnut: This one ended up in a tie. The judges awarded one prize for oddest shape to Bill Blazek for a nickar that resembled a skull-shaped ashtray, and another for oddest color to Bruce Haver for a bean in a very dark shade of orange.

The seaheart category was the hardest to judge. There are some extremely weird-looking seahearts floating around out there!

Bean-a-thon winners were:

- Most Species: Kimberly Mohlenhoff (25)
- Young Beaner: Avery Cranston (age 5, 10 species)
- Cool Bean: Kimberly Mohlenhoff (sugar apple)
- Non-Bean: Lily Kirkpatrick (age 9, *spirula* and 16 species, to boot) and Lisa Danniballe (Scottish-American Society tag)

As always, the exhibits threatened to overflow the room and provided visitors with a wide variety of fun and interesting opportunities to learn about the ocean and our beaches. Exhibits included:

- Krieger Publications' wonderful collection of nature books;
- Cathie's timeless sandbox and seabeam ID boards;
- Blair & Dawn Witherington's sea turtle books and the already-classic *Florida's Living Beaches*, as well as samples of Dawn's beautiful art;
- Jim Angy's spectacular wildlife photography;
- Curt Ebbesmeyer's trash pile. Curt's exhibit is never the same two years in a row. This year it featured everything from a collection of small plastic balls from ponytail holders, to a large piece of foam insulation from a Delta II rocket;
- Nan Rhodes' seabeam jewelry and mangroves;
- Alice Lowe's rock tumbler polishing exposition, along with samples of her polished seabeam art and lots of giveaways to pique visitors' curiosity;

- David McCree's book: *Florida Beaches – Finding Your Paradise on the Lower Gulf Coast*. David also blogs the beach at the [www.beachhunter.net](http://www.beachhunter.net) website;
- Linda McBrearty's collection of sea glass and odd-shaped shells and stones, including a quiz for the imaginative beachcomber to "Name that shape;"
- Elaine Norton and Carol Agnew's kid-friendly touchable exhibit and "ocean motion" display board;
- Bill Blazek's ever-astounding collection of hand-polished seabeans, along with this year's focus from his daily beachcombing: hundreds of stranded toys in every imaginable shape and color;
- Florida Beach Basics and Still Nature's educational materials, including laminated reference cards for beachcombers to carry along to the beach;
- And finally, the Bean-o-matic (of course!);

T-shirts sold like hotcakes this year. Perhaps it was because Nan Rhodes gave us yet another very cool design. We are now all set for our TV debut when "Dancing with the Shells" premieres.

I continue to be amazed year after year at the variety and quality of the raffle prize donations. Thank you so much to everyone who creates or procures so many wonderful items to support the Drifters.

Also many thanks to everyone who volunteered to make the symposium run smoothly. I've never seen the set-up and clean-up go so fast and efficiently. And those friendly faces at the hospitality table encourage people to join in our passion for the beach, as well as sell lots of raffle tickets. You all rock!

And, of course, a big thanks to the Cocoa Beach library staff, Ray Dickerson and others, for all the hard work they do both before and during the symposium. We couldn't do it without them.

This year's symposium is right around the corner. If you haven't done it already, mark your calendars for October 22nd and 23rd in Cocoa Beach. See you there!





## Interaction Between Species

by John Beerensson, [beerensson@bellsouth.net](mailto:beerensson@bellsouth.net)

The title of this article might be somewhat misleading. No, I'm not talking about a nickernut (*Caesalpinia* spp.) conversing with a sea heart (*Entada gigas*) over a candlelit dinner. Nor am I talking about a hamburger bean (*Mucuna* spp.) serenading a sea purse (*Dioclea* spp.). What I am talking about is teeth, beak, and claw marks found on these four species of sea-beans.

I'm an amateur paleontologist at heart; a fossil collector if you will. We commonly use the interaction phrase when describing a fossil of one animal species that shows teeth or claw marks made by another animal species. A classic example is a Miocene or Pliocene whale rib or vertebra showing a bite mark from a megalodon (*Carcharocles megalodon*) shark. Better yet, a bison (*Bison antiquus*) skull with an embedded Paleo-Indian spear point. Believe it or not, such an 11,000 year old skull was found in Florida's Wacissa River in 1982. Anyway, I'm hoping you botanists out there will allow me to use the interaction phrase when I talk about the plant world.

The hamburger bean is the most common of the aforementioned beans stranding on Florida east coast beaches. It is not that rare to find one with a few bite marks on one side or even both sides. Same goes with the sea heart and nickernut, but in lesser numbers. To find any of these three beans with more than twenty bite marks on each side is rare.



In my collection are two sea hearts, both of which have roughly two dozen bite marks on each side. One has the bites in an oval pattern measuring about 45 mm by 35 mm. The other has a circular pattern of bite marks measuring roughly 32 mm in diameter. Also in my collection is a gray nickernut (*C. bonduc*), very compressed, with roughly two dozen bite marks on each side. The bite marks are randomly placed, but more to the center of the nickernut.



It's now time to talk about the sea purse (*D. reflexa*). In my collection of over three hundred sea purses collected on Brevard County, Florida beaches, only one has bite marks; three to be exact, close together, and only on one side. Not very impressive! But maybe it is, if bite marks on sea purses are rare. My gut feel is that they are very rare.



Sooooooooo . . . how rare are bite marks on sea purses? Please let me know. Also, let me know if you have any hamburger beans, sea hearts, and nickernuts with over twenty bite marks on each side. If you have any, maybe at a future *Sea-Bean Symposium* you might win an Odd-Bean award.

And finally, if you have a sea purse with megalodon shark teeth marks, or with an embedded Paleo-Indian spear point, and you are ready to sell, I'm ready to pay big bucks.

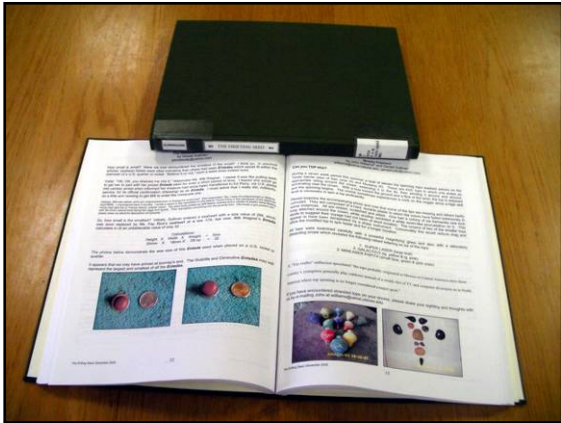


**What's New on Mustang Island**  
**A University of Texas Marine Science Institute Update**

Gerald Sullivan and John Williams

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The biggies since the last update were the arrival of a Cathie's bean<sup>(1)</sup>, the official entry of *The Drifting Seed* newsletter into the University of Texas (UT) Marine Science Institute (UTMSI) inventory of periodicals, a rare arrival of a MIB<sup>(2)</sup> and the stranding of an alien object.



With the completion of the accession of the newsletter into the OCLC World Cat (Online Computer Library Center World Catalog) the UTMSI library joined a limited cluster of very prestigious libraries in the world which have in their official inventory *The Drifting Seed* newsletter. In the United States it joins: Harvard University Botany Libraries, Hunt Inst. For Bot. Doc., Missouri Bot. Garden, National Agr Libr., Rancho Santa Ana Bot. Gard. Libr., New York Bot. Gard. Libr. and the Smithsonian Institute. Foreign libraries would include Bibliotheek Wageningen UR (Netherlands), Universiteit Leiden (Netherlands) and the Natural Hist. Museum in the United Kingdom. Kudos to the UTMSI library staff and John Williams for their diligence and

industry which made this possible. The process of accession, printing and professional binding is a complex and time consuming process. Good show!

The following is a list of newly arrived drift seeds:

<i>Astrocaryum</i> sp.	spherical starnut	<i>Macadamia integrifolia</i>	macadamia nut
<i>Bauhinia</i> sp.	orchid tree	<i>Merremia tuberosa</i>	woodrose
<i>Calocarpum compechiana</i>	canistel	<i>Mucuna</i> sp.	little black Mexican <i>Mucuna</i>
<i>Canavalia nitida</i>	Cathie's bean	<i>Pinus</i> sp.	pine cone
<i>Cycad</i> sp.	cycad	<i>Sesbania</i> sp.	bladder pod
<i>Dendrocius latifolius</i>	black calabash	<i>Smythia</i> spp.	
<i>Durio zibethinus</i>	durian	<i>Swietenia mahogoni</i>	West Indian mahogany
<i>Euphoria longan</i>	dragon's eye	<i>Terminalia</i> spp.	
<i>Ilex vomitorea</i>	yaupon holly	<i>Thevitia peruviana</i>	yellow oleander
<i>Lagerstroemia indica</i>	crape myrtle	<i>Zamid</i> sp.	cycad
* <i>Litchi chinensis</i>	lychee		

\* It is essential that co-authors work closely in order to succeed. For example, I received an email on 10-27-09 from John Williams asking if I could ID a picture of a pod and seed that he had found shortly after he arrived at UTMSI in 2005. 2005! Yep, I'd better have a talk with that boy, you think? The seed and pod were identified as lychee, but, me thinks he may have collected it on San Jose, our next door sister island.

Other notable happenings would include:

**1. New to the World.** Although the number of new arrivals diminished in comparison to previous updates, a total of eight seeds previously unreported as seabean were discovered in the strandlines<sup>(3)</sup>. These would include *Bauhinia*, *Euphoria*, *Ilex*, *Lagerstroemia*, 2 *Terminalia* and a



Zamid species. *Euphoria longan*, dragon's eye, was previously reported but only as "garbage" on Kauai beaches<sup>(4)</sup>. Dennis Doucette, a winter Texan from Michigan, was the fortunate drifter who discovered a dragon's eye at marker 34 on Mustang Island. This was a first for the island and it is now considered an authentic drift seed.

**2. Flight from Ike.** Chicken Little, aka Jerry Sullivan, was four days gone by the time hurricane Ike made landfall at Galveston, Texas, a mere two hundred miles east of Port Aransas. Fortunately, Mustang Isle experienced only an initial surge which disappointedly left very few stranded seeds. Nine days later a second wave of debris arrived, sweeping in thousands of giant pecans enclosed in their exocarps with short tree stems attached. Someone lost a super crop of pecans to the storm. An equally massive number of pine cones and round, green-colored, tightly-bound, golf ball size cones



also drifted ashore. See picture. At first, it was speculated that these spherical cones were possibly a new *Pinus* species, but upon drying for two weeks, all turned brown, crumbled into small recognizable segments and emitted the characteristic fragrance associated with bald cypress. Once again few other seabeaners were swept ashore, but resulted in the discovery of a most meaningful MIB<sup>(2)</sup>.

**3. Monkeying around.** The monkeycomb pod on display at the UT showroom was recalled by its owner, but was replaced by Pepper Pendzinski, a local seabeaner who donated her only *Apeiba aspera* to the collection. These pods are extremely rare around here.

**4. More Pepper.** Ms. Pendzinski also donated the first woodrose to the collection. A second one was received from the Mustang Island State Park Rangers and Dennis Doucette, not to be outdone, also materialized with one found on our barrier reef. These seeds are still considered a rare find here.

**5. *Mucuna* sp.** The little black Mexican *Mucuna* was previously reported on the Yucatan Peninsula<sup>(5)</sup>



but without any accompanying description or picture. Five have arrived on Mustang Island and their description is as follows: variable in shape and size, measuring approximately 20-24 mm in diameter and 10-12 mm thick; never round but "D" shaped, angular, dark brown to black or nearly so; hilum shiny black, raised, 3-5 mm width, a lighter colored 1 mm wide band borders the hilum; surface smooth; smiley<sup>(6)</sup> a straight black bar with the ends slightly

upturned. Refer to picture.

**6. Alien object from the outer reaches.** At the very end of a fruitless search of the minimal wrack a THING was sighted. It simply remained motionless on the strandline. It appeared to be larger than a cantaloupe, oval, dark brown and covered with thousands of 1/2" spikes. This sinister object was reminiscent of the business end of a medieval mace.

Nudging this alien matter a quarter of a turn revealed a gap on its underbelly large enough to insert one's hand.

Eck! A gelatinous slime, laced with vegetative filaments (cilium-like tissue) encircled a number of



semi-hard, 1 ½" x ¾" objects. Oh – slimo! The items were too slick to grasp but finally a couple were squirted from the cavity by squeezing the fist with item enclosed. A total of four were slithered from the goo.



You guessed it – no camera. By the time I returned with it, our beach cleaning crew made sure the THING did not multiply by neutralizing it with their truck tires. Please review this murderous crime scene in photo. A second photo shows a surviving remnant of the desiccated outer husk and a couple of seeds.

The uniqueness of this alien fruit made it easy to identify. Its existence has been known for over 600 years and the Malaysians named it durian from the word duri (thorn or spike). Please visit Google images for oodles of excellent pictures of the fruit of *Durio zibethinus*. Mustang Island would like to have claimed this as a first,

but a personal communication dated April 3, 2003, from Wayne H. McAlister, Matagorda Island National Wildlife Refuge revealed that Matagorda Island already had that distinction.

It should be noted that germination was attempted with six seeds. One succumbed to mold since I was fresh out of rubbing alcohol, cheap bourbon or Listerine<sup>(7)</sup>. Two others sprouted and are growing nicely – nicely. See picture. A mature tree will attain a growth of 80 to 165 feet in height. I can hardly wait. Remember, much like the coconut tree, do not stand underneath a durian without a protective workman's hard-hat, preferably perched on top of your head.

**7. Red Tide.** The arrival of *Karenia brevis*, the red tide algae which resides in the Gulf of Mexico, made it to our shores on three occasions this year. The worst was in October '09 and lasted about five days. For a two-hour period on the first day, only a count of five fools ventured onto the beach and they weren't seabeans except for one. Not fun. Burning and lacrimating eyes, irritated exposed skin, wheezing, coughing, expectorating and burning of the air passage were the major symptoms. Thousands upon thousands of fish succumbed and washed ashore with a myriad of other sea inhabitants.

**8. Jonah.** Fools swim where others fear to tread. Attired in full scuba gear, John Williams frolicked with a 20-foot whale shark for over an hour. Remember these monsters of the deep have over a 4-foot mouth opening which is lined with over 300 teeth. Perhaps, John should be reminded of the Australian, Steve Irwin, who is now truly down under because of a romp with a stingray.

**9. True seabeans.** What would an update be without a total count of hair scrunchies? How's 110 new arrivals!

**10. Perchance to dream.** How about a black colored Cathie's bean? Would you settle for a Red Horse Eye bean? You bet!



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## Update on Southend Coconut Strandings

by Dr. Roger A. Hewitt

12 Fairfield Road, Eastwood, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 5SB, UK

My most recent report on stranded coconuts at Southend-on-Sea (Hewitt 2009) ended on June 8, 2009 and included *Elaeis guineensis* Jacquin, from the North Sea surge of November 9, 2007. Since then I have noted fresh coconut strandings on June 25<sup>th</sup>, August 17<sup>th</sup>, September 1<sup>st</sup>, and November 2<sup>nd</sup>; additional to unbroken coconuts from Thorpe Bay on July 24<sup>th</sup> (endocarp with green algae, 424g mass, 294 mm transverse and 343 mm axial circumferences) and central Southend on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010 (with dry husk-cone, mass 626 g. 311mm by 490 mm circumferences). The Ganesha Festival was attended by 18,000 people at Shoebury East Beach on August 28-30; but by September 1<sup>st</sup> there were only three fragmentary coconuts there and two more in Thorpe Bay. There were two seen coming in with the March 1<sup>st</sup> tide after the Holi Festival (February 28<sup>th</sup>) rising against the ridge of gravel produced by tides during a rain storm on the edge of the French Hurricane. It is unclear whether these two coconuts had been floated locally.

### Reference

Hewitt, R.A. (2009) Stranding of Palm Endocarps at Southend-on-Sea. *The Essex Naturalist*, Number 26, pp. 163-165 [published by the Essex Field Club, [www.essexfieldclub.org.uk](http://www.essexfieldclub.org.uk)]

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### A Message in a Bottle

by Michele Kelley, [Mjkk40077@msn.com](mailto:Mjkk40077@msn.com)

The conditions in Melbourne, Florida, USA were a beachcomber's dream on the 19th day of September 2009. The tide was low and the beach was covered ankle deep in seaweed. It was the kind of day when you could walk miles without realizing just how far you had gone. I knew it would be a great day.

After pocketing a few choice seabean I walked back and forth from the tide line to the seaweed wrack. I had only walked a couple of miles when I came across a very unusual shaped bottle. Wow, how beautiful! I loved it at first sight. As I looked closer I could see it had a message inside. With the song "Message in a Bottle" sung by "The Police" playing over and over in my head, my interest peaked. As I journeyed farther my thoughts turned to the message writer.... perhaps a lost soul on a deserted island had thrown the bottle into the ocean in hopes of a rescuer? Or maybe it could be a mysterious treasure map, containing the location of a lost pirate treasure centuries old. Or, at last a photo of the man on the grassy knoll, solving the conspiracy theory once and for all. My day dreams placed me on the cover of *People Magazine* and traveling the circuit of the *Today Show* and *Good Morning America* telling and retelling my tale of the message in a bottle.

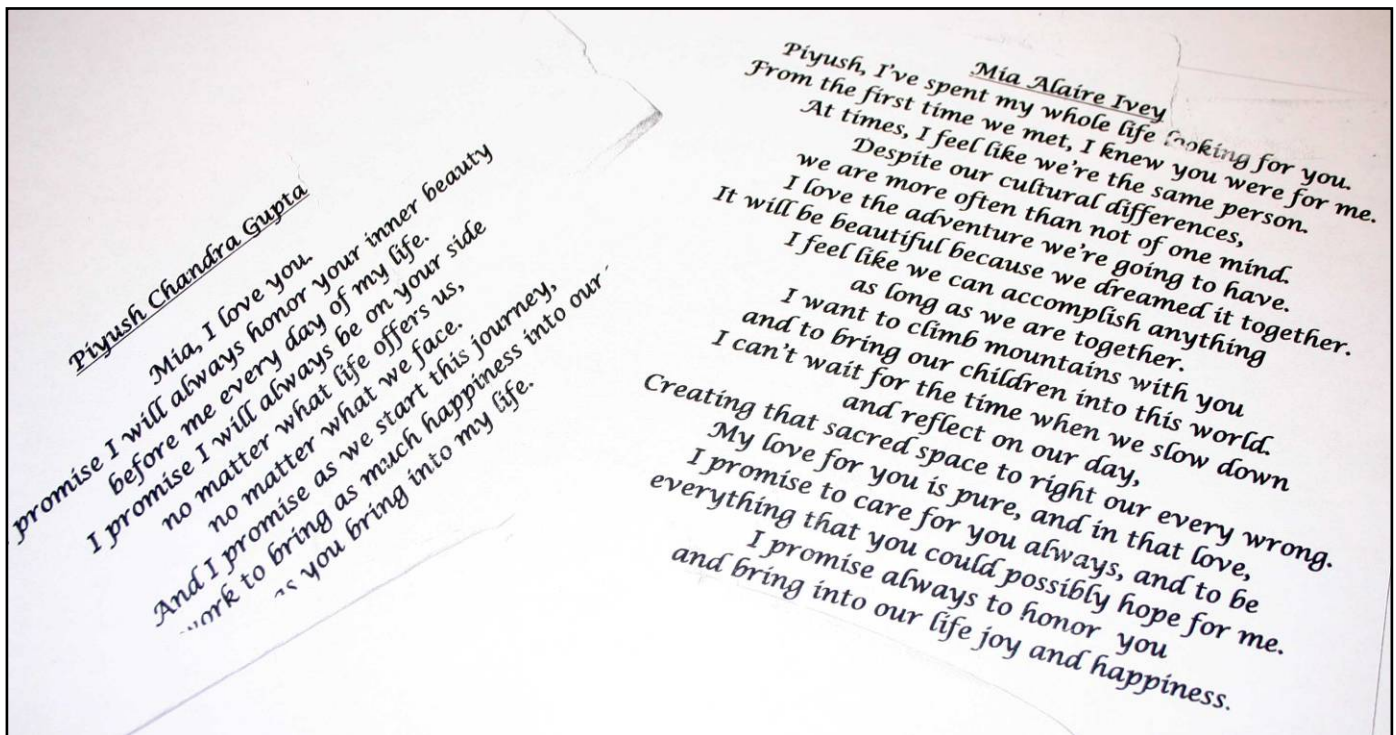
Upon closer inspection I could tell the bottle had not been floating long as it didn't have any barnacles and the paper inside was still dry. When I got home I unscrewed the tiny cork and with tweezers removed the note. At first I thought it was a hoax, a spoof on Nicholas Spark's book *Message in a Bottle*, quoting Kevin Costner's character. But then I realized it must have been from a wedding, it was testimony from a bride and groom pledging their love for one another. Their names



were unusual and foreign sounding. Perhaps they worked on a cruise ship and had thrown the bottle over board during a wedding ceremony in hopes of it traveling in the currents to a far away land.

My next step was to show it to my seabeam friends at the next "beaner's night out." With the help of Brenda Spletter, they were located on Facebook. After posting the fact that their bottle had been found and where, we waited to hear from them. When there was no reply right away, my children teased me and said it was because they were still on the cruise. I was not to be deterred. I held out hope. Soon the bride replied with the story that she is from Springfield, Missouri and the groom is from India. She told how they were married on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of September at the Sandy Shores Resort in south Melbourne Beach and had tossed the bottle in the ocean as a part of the ceremony. I knew of the resort, it was only two miles south of my home. I was a little disappointed to realize I had traveled farther than the bottle. Instead of floating around the world, it probably came ashore with the first high tide and lay stranded in the seaweed for ten days.

Alas, the bottle did not make me famous. And where it may have lacked in travel, it made up for in romance and intrigue. It was exciting to find and I now own a beautiful bottle and have an interesting story to tell.



## ***Pterocarpus* sp. A New Tropical Drift Fruit for Europe**

by Gerhard C. Cadée & Michel Rühland

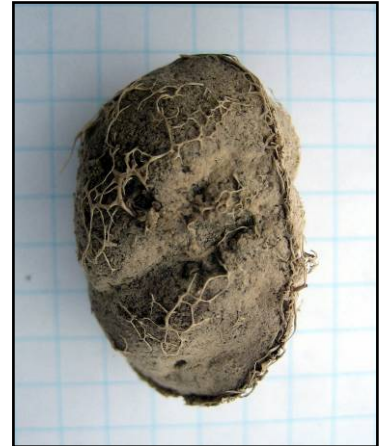
[Gerhard.cadee@nioz.nl](mailto:Gerhard.cadee@nioz.nl), [maruhland01@hetnet.nl](mailto:maruhland01@hetnet.nl)

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2009 Michel Rühland collected a drift fruit on the Dutch North Sea coast near Castricum aan Zee, province North-Holland. The gray-colored fruit (size 31.0 x 25.3 mm, width 21.3 mm) has an eroded surface, showing some fibers left of an outer layer. Its margin is formed by a sharp rim, its attachment area is small, its surface is irregular and lumpy. As Michel knows Gerhard's interest he sent it to him, but Gerhard did not recognize it, made pictures and sent them by e-mail to Ed Perry. Ed recognized it immediately as an eroded Bloodwood fruit, a plump variety/species of *Pterocarpus*. "Bloodwood seeds tend to vary greatly in size and shape, but the texture with veining is one of their characteristics," Ed Perry e-mailed the first of May 2009.



### ***Pterocarpus officinalis* Jacq.**

Bloodwood, *Pterocarpus officinalis* Jacq. Is an up to 40 m high, evergreen tree, native in the Caribbean Basin and Central and South America, where it grows mainly in coastal wetlands, landward from the mangrove zone. It belongs to the Legume family (Leguminosae) and has flat, round, winged seedpods (fruits) each containing one seed (Weaver, 1997). These winged fruits may drop in water and can be transported over considerable distances downstream and to the ocean. The fruits are light, fibrous discs, 3 to 8 cm long and 5 to 10 mm thick, according to Gunn & Dennis (1976). Perry & Dennis (2003) mention the same size ranges. They give an excellent picture with eight specimens showing their typically eroded surfaces and variation in size and shape. They also write that these drift fruits are frequently encountered on the coasts of Florida.



Some years ago, Ed Perry sent Gerhard specimens from Florida; so the first author might have recognized it if he had better looked in his own collection. Of those Ed Perry sent him, two are thicker than the published data (15.1 and 15.9 mm against the reported 5-10 mm). Both Gunn & Dennis in Perry & Dennis also report smaller fruits of about 3.5 cm long but 2 cm wide from Florida beaches resembling bloodwood fruits but more plump not as flat and disc-shaped as *Pterocarpus officinalis*. Whether these also belong to *P. officinalis* or to one of the other Bloodwood species is unknown at the moment (there are at least 20 species according to Weaver, 1997). Van Roosmalen (1985) mentions three *Pterocarpus* species from Surinam of which one *P. santalinoides* l'Herit. Ex DC (synonym *P. amazonicus* Huber) has also a suborbicular spongy fruit, but wider than *P. officinalis*. Ed Perry (e-mail, 1 May 2009) also suggested the possibility it might be *P. amazonicus*. It is probably not possible to identify the Dutch specimen to the species level, therefore we prefer to identify it as a *Pterocarpus* sp.

### **A 'peregrine' drift fruit?**

Up to now, no *Pterocarpus* drift fruit has been reported from European shores: Nelson (2000) nor Brochard & Cadée (2005) mention them. Remains the question: how did this specimen arrive at the Dutch coast whereas it is not found on other European coasts that do receive much more tropical



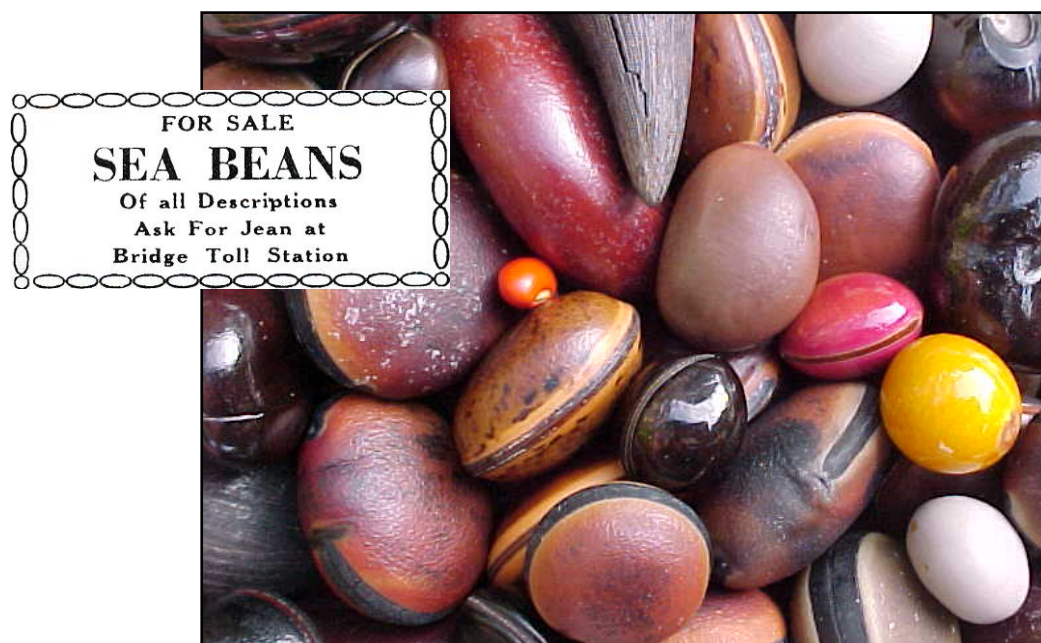
Atlantic drift seeds? Is our Dutch specimen really a true, long-distance drift fruit ('peregrine' in the terminology of Nelson)? Gunn & Dennis (1976) report a drifting time of 1-year maximal, which is probably too short for transport by ocean currents to Europe. One peculiarity of *Pterocarpus* fruits from Florida beaches is that they often show holes of tube-worms (*Teredo*). We in Holland are familiar with *Teredo navalis* an invasive species introduced with Dutch wooden ships from the Tropics already in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. *T. navalis* makes large and long holes in wooden structures. Apparently the species occurring in *Pterocarpus* (also present in one of the specimens sent by Ed Perry) is happy with a much smaller room. The absence of boring *Teredo* in our Dutch specimen casts some doubts on a real long distance transport of the fruit. However, why should bloodwood fruits be transported by man? We hope this paper will result in more *Pterocarpus* reports from European coasts!

We are very grateful for the help Ed Perry offered us with the identification of this drift fruit.

## Literature

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Figs. The *Pterocarpus* sp. From the Dutch coast (the background squares are 5 mm x 5 mm).



**Oh My Aching Sacroiliac!**  
Gerald Sullivan, [geraldsully@yahoo.com](mailto:geraldsully@yahoo.com)

I'm sure I'm not alone since many other drifters also suffer pain from the sacroiliac or lumbar region of their lower back. Being older and decrepit is not a prerequisite, even the young and hardy with a misspent youth such as contact sports etc., may experience this undesirable affliction associated with seabeaning.

There are times one must limit the repetitions of bending over to pluck a "jewel" from the wrack. Between 5 and 10 stoops and my distal backbones begin warning me. Also following 2 or 3 bends, an onset of lightheadedness or mild dizziness often occurs which is caused by the blood in one's body, following the laws of gravity, rushing to and from the noggin with each stoop and subsequent straightening to the upright position. Not good!

Solutions? Yes, luckily there are a couple. First – simply don't frequent the beach, **preposterous!** Secondly – if one is agile enough, bend at the knees to a squatting position, simultaneously keeping the back straight, then grasp the desired seabean and return to a standing position. This is totally **disgusting** and **disrespectful**, only the few and mightily gifted can complete this skillful maneuver. Thirdly—one might rely on a seabean scooper.

Commercially, there are innumerable models of mechanical metal trash picker-uppers. According to the internet prices range from less than \$10 to a smidgen under \$100. Inadvertently these picker-uppers are mistakenly used as a walking cane, becoming damaged and dysfunctional in a short period of time. Many shell seekers have been observed utilizing them.

Not for me! I prefer the Andy Warhol version of the seabean scooper. My preference is that line of scoopers constructed from a tomato soup can which is attached with two screws to generally a 1" x 2" stick with a variable length to suit the drifter's height. It is strongly recommended not to use a tomato soup can with a pull-tab top since the residual ¼" lip makes it difficult to collect small seeds. The mouth of the attached can may be adjusted to accommodate larger drift seeds, as with a large seaheart. See picture. I would've used Campbell's tomato soup cans like Andy, but they had pull-tab tops. There are a few disadvantages since both wear-n-tear and also wetness can separate the tomato label from the can, leaving an unimaginative shiny, silvery metal scooper. From time to time the screws must be retightened. That reminds me—I know several drifters with one or more screws that could use some adjusting, yours truly included.

The recent introduction of the Super Special Seabean & Sand Strainer Scooper has enjoyed immediate acceptance among drifters. This scooper is composed of a properly sized metal kitchen strainer, one with a 3" diameter is preferred, attached to a 1" x 2" wood stick of appropriate length. My fancy favors a staff of about 5 feet. As you can see in the picture, screws were no longer available for securing the strainer to the staff. If you can't screw it, duc it or duct it. One can now duck it, since there is a brand, Duck duct tape, you know. Inverting the entire apparatus allows one to use it as a supportive walking staff without harming the strainer or as a wracky debris agitator (prodder) and defensively as a weapon to ward off alligators, giant sand crabs and other ferocious vermin. Advantages would include its versatility, low cost, light weight, easy maintenance and a no-brainer to construct. Perfecto mundo!

Not all undesirable physical maladies associated with seabeaning can be remedied by using one of these magnificent seabean scoopers. For instance, many drifters suffer from moderate to severe Dunlop's Disease which leads to lumbar aggravation that is exacerbated by normal seabeaning activity. This is an ongoing condition in which adipose tissue of the abdomen **dun-lopped-over-da-beltline**, creating extreme stress on the lower portion of the spinal column.

Another unfortunate physical impairment which cannot be rectified with the use of seabean scoopers is addressed in the testimony of The Son of Beerens<sup>(1)</sup>. “My eyes are getting so bad that I can no longer find a bean less than four feet in diameter.” Comment: John, if this is true, how do you continue to reign as the champion bay bean drifter on the Florida coast?

This myopic condition, aka nearsightedness, was also attested to by Dr. Charles Nelson in his “Memoirs of a Short-Sighted Irish Sea-Beaner”<sup>(2)</sup> in which he states, “Even my toes are not in focus, so beach sand is a blur when I’m standing up. Change of posture – I recommend beach-combing on all fours.....” Sorry Charlie! Can’t help ya. Question: after assuming that 4-point position, how in the devil does one get up?

Seriously, these seabean scoopers are for real and work in preventing a ton of back discomfort. Don’t laugh, sooner or later, you may end up designing a custom scooper for your own use and pleasure.

Bibliography:

- (1) Beerensson, J. 2009. How Big is Your Smallest???????, *The Drifting Seed* 15(3):3.
- (2) Nelson, C. 2004. Memoirs of a Short-Sighted Irish Sea-Beaner. *The Drifting Seed* 10(2):2-3.



### News and Notes

**Sea-Bean Awareness Day is May 14<sup>th</sup>!** Each year, remember Cathie Katz’s birthday and celebrate the allure of sea-beans with all you know (and maybe some you don’t know) on this worldwide special day. For more information, visit the [www.seabean.com](http://www.seabean.com) website.

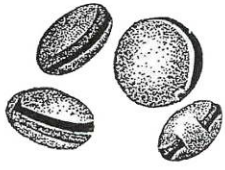
We are very pleased to announce the Keynote Speaker at the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Sea-Bean Symposium and Beachcombers’ Festival: **Mr. John Pendergrast**, a certified Incident Meteorologist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA). John will present to us “Weather and Beachcombing” and share with us the weather secrets that make our best beachcombing opportunities. John is a native Floridian from Orlando who graduated Florida State University and now resides with his wife and son in Melbourne Beach, FL. He loves to hunt beans when time allows and his favorite finds are about 5 Mary’s beans and a little marble (*Oxyrhynchus* sp.).



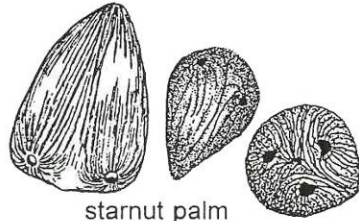


Simple Guide to Common Drift Seeds

(Illustrations by Cathie Katz and Pamela J. Paradine)



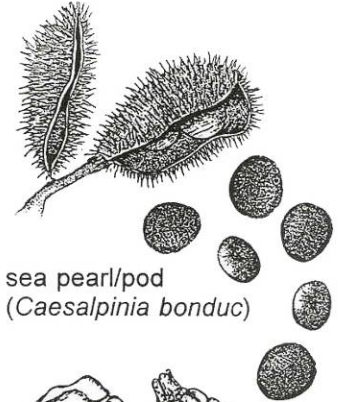
hamburger bean  
(*Mucuna* spp.)



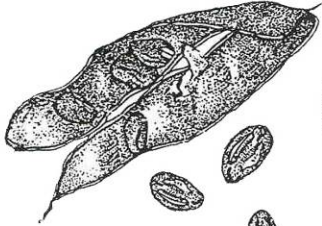
starnut palm  
(*Astrocaryum* spp.)



country almond  
(*Terminalia catappa*)



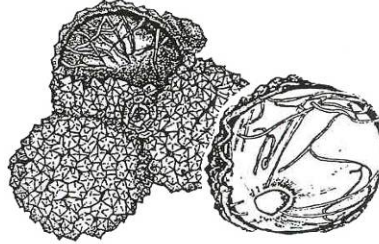
sea pearl/pod  
(*Caesalpinia bonduc*)



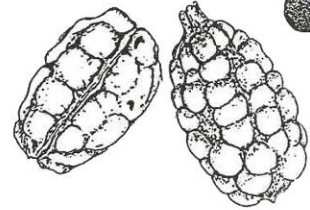
bay bean/pod  
(*Canavalia rosea*)



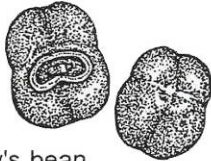
sea heart  
(*Entada gigas*)



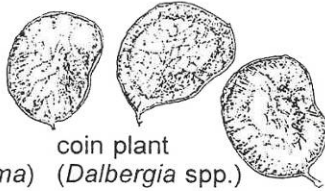
golfball/pod  
(*Manicaria saccifera*)



hand grenade  
(*Sacoglottis amazonica*)



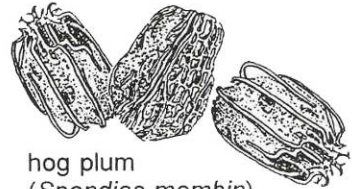
Mary's bean  
(*Merremia discoidesperma*)



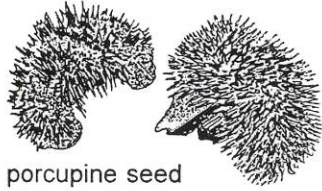
coin plant  
(*Dalbergia* spp.)



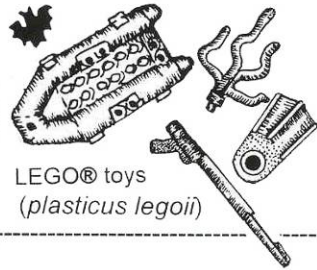
sea purse  
(*Dioclea reflexa*)



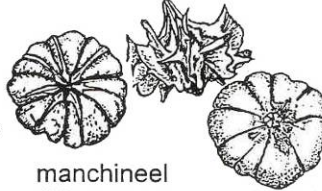
hog plum  
(*Spondias mombin*)



porcupine seed  
(*Caryocar microcarpum*)



LEGO® toys  
(*plasticus legoii*)



manchineel  
(*Hippomane mancinella*)



white/black/red mangrove  
(various genera)



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