PLANT FACT SHEET

Arenga microcarpa Beccari

GENUS *Arenga* **FAMILY** Arecaceae

COMMON NAMES Arenga palm, Baruk sago palm

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Cabbage, Palm heart, Sap, Stem pith

The shoots are eaten.
It is probable that the male flower could be cut off and the sap collected and boiled to concentrate the sugar.
Sago starch can probably also be processed from the trunk.
CAUTION The juice of the fleshy fruit irritates the skin.

DESCRIPTION

A small clumpy palm with several stems. The palm is 8 m tall and the stems are 10 cm across. It has leaves which are once branched (uni-pinnate) and with narrow, long, leaflets along the leaf stalk. The leaflets form a V shape along the midrib. The leaflet at the end is often triangular. The leaf fronds arch over. The flower stalk is like fishtail palm but smaller. This stalk is produced from among the leaves. The flower stalk is large and with simple branching. The highest flowers are female and the lower ones can be male or of both sexes. The fruit spikes hang over and are densely clustered with fruit. The fruit are red and juicy. They are 1.5 cm across. There are 2-3 seeds inside a fruit.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. They are widespread and common in the lowlands of Papua New Guinea. It occurs on rocky shores and in lowland forest. It is often near streams. It grows up to 700 m above sea level.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

They normally grow wild. Plants can be grown from seeds. They can also be grown from suckers.

NOTES

The fruit and seeds have stinging crystals which can be irritating and poisonous. There are 17-20 Arenga species.

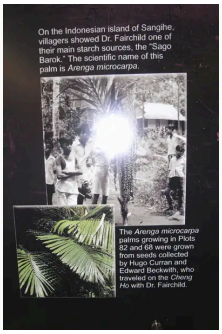
PICTURES



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