PLANT FACT SHEET

Livistona benthamii F. M. Bailey

GENUS *Livistona* **FAMILY** Arecaceae

COMMON NAMES Fan palm

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Growing tip, Cabbage, Palm heart

The central growing tip is eaten raw or lightly roasted.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen palm. It grows to 15 m high and spreads to 3 m across. The stem is erect and heavily armed with spines. The trunk is 30-40 cm across. The trunk is grey to black. It has a single stem and fan leaves. It has a densely leafy crown which is rounded and drooping. The leaves are 1-1.5 m long and 1-1.5 m across. They are shiny and dark green. Leaves are divided into narrow segments with strong thorny leaf stalks. The leaf stalks are 1.5 m long. The leaf bases are persistent on the trunk. The flowers are cream or yellow in elongated heads. The flowers are 1-1.2 cm across and the heads can be 2.5 m long. The fruit are berries. They are 1 cm across. They are purple black when ripe. They have a powdery covering. They contain a single hard shelled seed.

HABITAT

A tropical palm. It does best on light to medium soils. It needs moist soils and a protected partly shaded position. It is damaged by drought and frost. It grows naturally on monsoon forest often near streams. It can stand seasonal flooding. In north Queensland it grows from sea level to 100 m altitude. In the Cairns Botanical Gardens.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. The seed need to be planted fresh. Seed germinate in 3-4 months. Seedlings are difficult to transplant.

NOTES

There are 28 Livistona species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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