PLANT FACT SHEET

Ptychosperma macarthurii (H. Wendl. ex Veitch) H. Wendl. ex Hook. f.

GENUS *Ptychosperma* **FAMILY** Arecaceae

COMMON NAMES Macarthur Palm, Grey Cane palm

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Cabbage, Buds, Palm heart

The central bud or cabbage is eaten.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen clustering palm. It grows to 3-10 m high and spreads to 2-4 m across. The stems are erect, slender and form clumps. They have rings of scars on the trunk. The leaves are dark green and divided along the stalk. They are 1-1.5 m long. They are feather like. The leaves arch in a loose crown. The leaflets are narrow, bright green and with ragged teeth near the tips. The flowers are in branching sprays 30-45 cm long. These come from below the crown-shaft. The flowers are greenish-yellow and 8 mm across. The fruit are bright red berries. They are 1.5 cm across. They are waxy. The fruit contains a seed which has 5 ridges along its length.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It does best in moist, well-composted, well-drained soils. It needs a protected, partly shaded position. It grows in evergreen monsoon vine forest. It is normally near permanent springs and on rich organic soils. It is damaged by drought and frost. It needs a temperature above 16°C. In full sunlight the fronds can become bleached. In the Cairns Botanical Gardens. It suits hardiness zones 10-11. Mt Cootha Botanical Gardens. In Townsville palmetum.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seed germinate in 2-3 months. It planted fresh in moist peat and with warmth and humidity seed germinate easily and quickly. Plants can also be grown by division of the clump. Young plants need protection from excessive sun.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Seedlings can be slow growing. In Australia, flowering is from August to October.

NOTES

There are about 30 Ptychosperma species.

PICTURES



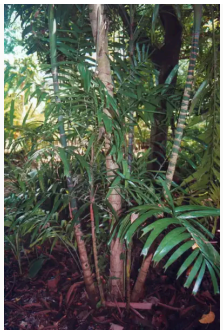
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