PLANT FACT SHEET

Brahea armata S. Watson

GENUS *Brahea* **FAMILY** Arecaceae

COMMON NAMES Blue Hesper palm

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Nuts, Fruit, leaves

The fruit is eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A medium sized palm. It grows to 12-15 m tall. The trunk is single and thick and grey. It can be 40-50 cm across. It can have the dead leaves hanging on the trunk or the trunk can be smooth but covered with old leaf scars. The leaf stalks are lined with thorns. The leaves are stiff and spread out like fingers on a hand. They are fan shaped. The leaves are covered with a pale blue bloom. The flowering stalk comes from amongst the leaves. It arches out further than the leaves. This flowering stalk can be 4-6 m long. The fruit are 12 mm across and yellow-brown when ripe. The seed is round.

HABITAT

It will grow from subtropical to temperate climates. It needs well drained soil and full sunlight. It can tolerate some frost. In Mexico it grows in dry rocky soils. It is often on poor alkaline soils. In Mexico it grows from sea level to 1400 m altitude. In Brisbane Botanical Gardens. It suits hardiness zones 9-11.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. The seed germinate erratically in weeks or more than a year when the seed are older. Fresh seeds germinate easily. Seeds retain their ability to grow, for long periods of time. Seeds should be soaked well, before planting. Plants do not transplant easily.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is slow growing when young.

NOTES

There are about 12-16 Brahea species. They all grow in Mexico.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

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