PLANT FACT SHEET

Lodoicea maldivica (Gmelin) Persoon

GENUS *Lodoicea* **FAMILY** Arecaceae

COMMON NAMES Coco-de-Mer, Double Coconut, Sea Coconut palm

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Nuts, Cabbage, Palm heart

The unripe kernel and the crown of the trunk are eaten. They are also preserved in vinegar.
The young immature nuts are eaten.
The juice from the fruit pulp is eaten with sugar and cassa meal.
The pulp yields an edible oil.

DESCRIPTION

A solitary palm. It grows 25 m tall. The trunk is slender being about 25 cm across. Near the base there is a rounded bowl with roots growing out from this. It has large fan-shaped leaves. The leaf stalk continues into the leaf. The leaves are dark green and glossy. They have stiffly spreading segments. The fruit are very large. It has the largest seed of any plant in the world. The fruit can be 20 kg weight. When the seed is cut crossways it looks like two coconuts. Viable nuts sink but dead or infertile ones float. Male and female plants are necessary to get fruit.

HABITAT

A subtropical plant. It suits the hot wet, lowland tropics. A warm or tropical climate is essential. A deep soil is important. It occurs naturally in the Seychelles. It suits hardiness zones 10-11.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seed may take 6-18 months. Seed need to be sown in their permanent position because they have a long sinker which may go 4 m deep. To overcome this problem in nurseries people stack several bottomless pots on top of each other.

Harvesting and Seed Production

They are slow growing. Plants can grow 30-60 years before flowering. Fruit take 5-7 years to mature on the plant. The time can also be half this. A fruit can weigh 20 kg.

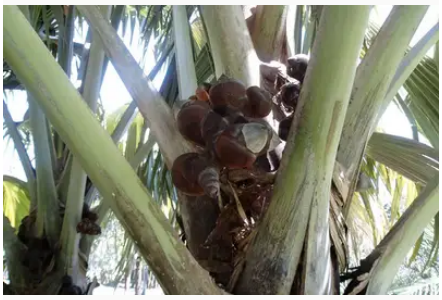
NOTES

There is only one Lodoicea species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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