PLANT FACT SHEET

Carpentaria acuminata (Wendl. & Drude) Becc.

GENUS *Carpentaria* **FAMILY** Arecaceae

COMMON NAMES Carpentaria palm

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Heart, Buds, Cabbage, Palm heart

The palm heart is edible but as this would kill the palm it is not normally eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A medium sized palm. The trunk is smooth, slender and ringed with old leaf scars. Plants grow 10-30 m high and spreads 3-7 m across. The trunk is 15-30 cm thick. The leaf sheaths form a greyish-green crown-shaft 60-100 cm long. The palm has a small crown of arching fronds. Leaves are arching and dark green. They are feather-like and 2-4 m long. It has closely spaced strap like leaflets 20-60 cm long by 2-4 cm wide. The leaflets taper to a ragged end. The flowering stalks are 1.5 m long. The stalk is flattened. Several flowering stalks can occur at the same time. The flower stalks come from below the crown-shaft. The flowers are cup shaped and cream. They are about 1 cm across. Male and female flowers are produced on the same stalk. The fruit are yellow and red when ripe. They are oval with a pointed tip. They are 1-2 cm long by 15-18 mm wide. They have a thick, fleshy, juicy layer around one seed.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. They need a temperature above 13-15°C. It will grow on most soils. It needs a protected, warm, sunny position. It is damaged by drought and frost. It needs regular moisture and humidity. Plants are often on creek banks and low sites which are occasionally flooded. The soil needs to be well-drained. In the Cairns Botanical Gardens. It suits hardiness zones 11-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from fresh seed. Seed germinate in 2-4 months. Seedlings are not easy to transplant. They should be re-potted regularly.

Harvesting and Seed Production

They grow quickly in hot, humid places.

NOTES

The juice from ripe fruit can damage skin. There is only one Carpentaria species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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