PLANT FACT SHEET

Iriartea deltoidea Ruiz. et Pav.

GENUS *Iriartea* **FAMILY** Arecaceae

COMMON NAMES Barriguda palm, Iriartea palm

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Shoots, Cabbage, Seeds, Palm heart, Fruit

The palm heart is eaten raw or cooked.
The young fruit is eaten raw.
The flowers yield an ash used as a substitute for salt.

DESCRIPTION

A large palm. It has a single trunk. It can grow 17 m high. The trunk is 25 cm across. Older trunks are light grey to white. Plants growing in the lowlands have a bulge in the middle of the trunk. There are stilt roots around the base. These can be 1.3-2 m high. They are dark coloured and have short, prickly thorns. The crown-shaft is light greyish-green. It is 1-1.3 m high. The crown of leaves has 6 leaves which form a circle. The leaves are feather like. They are on a leaf stalks 4-5 m long. The leaflets are wedge shaped and 60-100 cm long. They are flat and shiny. They are irregularly fan shaped. They have jagged tips. The more narrow and feather like leaflets form once the palm emerges into the sunlight above the leaf canopy. The flowering stalk forms beneath the crown-shaft. The bracts around it are 3.3 m long. These curve downwards. The flowering stalk has many downward hanging yellow branches. The fruit are round and yellowish. They become bluish-black when ripe. They are 2.5 cm across.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows from sea level to 1400 m altitude. It grows in rainforest on the slopes of mountains. It cannot tolerate frost. It needs humus rich soil and adequate moisture. The soil needs to be well drained. It grows up to 1,300 m above sea level.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seeds.

NOTES

There is only one Iriartea species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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