PLANT FACT SHEET

Caryota cumingii Lodd. ex Mart.

GENUS *Caryota* **FAMILY** Arecaceae

COMMON NAMES Philippines fishtail palm

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Cabbage, Seeds, Starch, Palm heart, Sap

The bud is cooked and eaten as a vegetable.
The sap of the flower is collected for tuba or palm wine.
Sago starch is made from the pith of the stems.

DESCRIPTION

A solitary palm. It grows 5 to 8 m in height and 20 cm across. They can be 12 m high. It has a thick, deeply ringed trunk. They have spreading alternate leaves. The leaves are 3.3 m long and 2 m wide. They grow in 2 or 3 closely set tiers at the top of the plant. The tips of the leaves curve over and hang down. The bract (spathe) below the flowers is very large. The fruit is round and small in size with a single seed. The pulpy outer covering contains very many stingy needle like crystals. The seed has a brown polished surface. The branches of the flower stalk bear strongly hairy very small scales.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It suits the hot humid lowlands. Widely distributed in the islands of the Philippines. It suits hardiness zones 11-12. Adelaide Botanical Gardens. In Adelaide Botanical Gardens hot house.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Germination can be irregular. Seeds may take 10-12 months to germinate.
It can also be grown by suckers.

NOTES

There are 12 Caryota species. They are tropical.

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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