PLANT FACT SHEET

Manicaria saccifera Gaertn.

GENUS *Manicaria* **FAMILY** Arecaceae

COMMON NAMES Monkey Cap Palm

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Nuts, Pith - starch, Fruit, Oil, Seedlings, Seed, Medicine

The juice of the young fruit is eaten.
The sago or starch is harvested from the stems.
The seeds are a source of oil.
The seeds have a hard seed coat but once rotting the inside is eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A solitary palm. It can be clumping. It often forms dense colonies. The trunk is 10 m high. It is often 2 m high. It is 35 cm across. The leaves can be 7-10 m long and 2 m wide. The leaves are unsegmented unless separated by wind. The bract below the flower (spathe) is sack-like and fibrous. The flowering stalks comes from among the leaf bases. It is 1 m long. The fruit are hard and woody. They are round or with 2 lobes. The fruit are 4-6 cm across. The fruit can float in rivers.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in extensive stands in freshwater swamps. It also grows in seasonally flooded rainforest. It needs warm humid conditions. It does best in shade. It cannot stand temperatures below 10°C. It needs lots of moisture year round. It needs humus rich acid soils. In Brisbane Botanical Gardens hothouse.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Fresh seeds germinate in 4-6 months.

NOTES

There are 1-4 Manicaria species. Young leaves are used as sails by Warao Indians. They are also used for thatch. The spathe is used for a loin cloth or hat (temiche).

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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