PLANT FACT SHEET

Caryota maxima Blume ex Mart.

GENUS *Caryota* **FAMILY** Arecaceae

COMMON NAMES Giant mountain fishtail palm, Burma suwar

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Sago, stem - starch, Sap, Bud, Cabbage, Palm heart

The starch of the stem can be processed for sago.
The sap of the flowering stalk can be collected for toddy.
The heart or terminal bud is eaten as a vegetable.

DESCRIPTION

A single stemmed palm. It has a thick ringed trunk. It grows 20 m high. The trunk can be 40-60 cm across. The leaves are large and compound and are twice divided. The leaflets are leathery and are fishtail shaped. The end one is fan shaped. The leaflets are 15-20 cm long. The leaflets are blunt and rounded and shallowly toothed at the tips. The flowering stalks are 3 m long. They hang down. The flowers are of one sex in groups of 3. They are cream. It fruits then dies. The fruit contain stinging crystals. The fruit is reddish pink and up to 4 cm wide with 1-3 seeds. The seeds are smooth and black.

HABITAT

A tropical and subtropical plant. It grows in mountains in N India and Thailand. It grows up to 1,000 m altitude. It can tolerate cold. It grows in open forest near Canton in China. They are widely distributed in the Philippines in valleys and on wooded hills. They are occasionally found in dense humid forests. It grows in Sydney Botanical gardens. It suits hardiness zones 9-12. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seed germinate erratically.

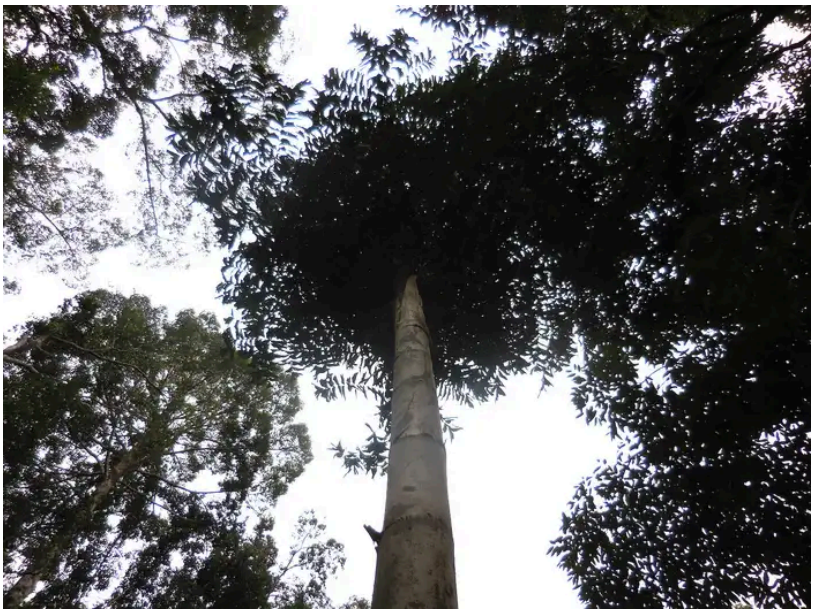
Harvesting and Seed Production

They are very fast growing with warmth and humidity.

NOTES

There are 12 Caryota species. They are tropical.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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