PLANT FACT SHEET

Syagrus romanzoffiana (Cham.) Glassman

GENUS *Syagrus* **FAMILY** Arecaceae

COMMON NAMES Queen palm

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Palm heart, Cabbage, Seed, Nut

The fruit is eaten raw.
The young buds are preserved in oil or vinegar and eaten as a vegetable. They are bitter until treated.
The trunk yields starch.
The kernels yield an oil.
Caution: The unripe seed may be toxic.

DESCRIPTION

A tall robust palm. It has a single stem and feather leaves. It has a wide spreading crown due to dark green arching fronds but their is no crownshaft. Often there are a number of dead fronds hanging from the trunk. The trunk is grey and grows to 20 m tall and 30-60 cm across. It is fairly straight. It has widely spaced leaf scars. The leaves are 3-5 m long. The leaf stalk is about 1 m long. There are many crowded leaflets often arranged in small groups and attached at different angles. The base of the leaf has a shredded edge around the trunk. The leaflets are 1 m long and 3 cm wide. They have a long pointed tip. The flowering stalk comes from among the leaf bases. The flowering stalk has many branches. It is 1-2 m long and many slender flower producing small branches. Several flowering stalks are often present at the same time. Two pointed woody bracts surround the flowering stalk. The flowers are yellow and male flowers 8-10 mm long while female flowers are 5 mm long. Both sexes occur on the one stalk. Fruit are crowded in long hanging masses. They are green but turn yellow when ripe. They are 2.5-3 cm long and 2-3 cm wide. The fruit are edible. Seeds are round and have a fleshy layer around them. There are named varieties and also various hybrids.

HABITAT

They do best in the tropics and subtropics but will grown in warm temperate regions. They often grow naturally along river banks. They will tolerate salt laden winds. In alkaline soils trees can suffer from iron and manganese deficiency. It needs temperatures above 13°C. In Argentina it grows below 500 m above sea level. It suits hardiness zones 9-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from fresh seed. The fruit can be used as seed. These germinate irregularly over 2 months. They are easy to transplant.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is fast growing.

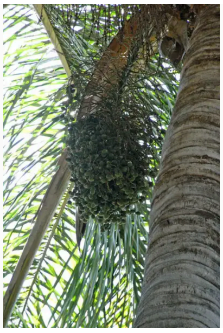
NOTES

There are about 30 Syagrus species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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