PLANT FACT SHEET

Arenga pinnata (Wurmb) Merr.

GENUS *Arenga* **FAMILY** Arecaceae

COMMON NAMES Black Sugar palm

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Juice - flowers, Sap, Seeds, Cabbage, Sago, Starch, Palm heart

The bud is eaten raw or cooked. The sap is collected for vinegar etc.
The fleshy kernels of the fruit are cooked and eaten. (The fruit contain calcium oxalate and are not edible)
Edible starch can be extracted from the stem.
The palm heart is edible. It is also used for pickles.

DESCRIPTION

A large palm. It grows to 18 m high. It forms one trunk 30 cm across and covered with old leaf bases and black fibres. It has spines 7.5 cm long. It has long leaves which reach upwards. They have leaflets along the stalk made up of 100 or more pairs. The leaves are 8.5 m long. The leaflets are whitish beneath, lobed at the tip and with ear like pieces near the base. They have large flower stalks hanging down from the leaf axils. Several fruit stalks develop from the top downwards. When the palm is mature a flowering shoot is sent out from the axil of the upper leaf then followed by other flowers until the tree reserves are exhausted and the palm dies. The fruit are round and dark red. They are 4 cm across. The fruit pulp damages skin. There are usually 3 seeds per fruit. They have one flat side.

HABITAT

A tropical palm. It needs warmth and humidity. It grows in lowland forest up to 500 m altitude. Widely distributed at low and medium altitudes throughout the settled areas of the Philippines along streams. It grows in limestone areas. It suits hardiness zones 10-12. In the Cairns Botanical Gardens. In Yunnan. In Townsville Palmetum.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. The seed grow easily.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is fast growing and short lived. An estimated sugar yield for 150-200 trees per hectare is 10 tons of marketable sugar over 10-15 years. A tree can yield 2 litres per day for 25 days. If the growing tip or cabbage is removed the palm usually develops side shoots and remains alive.

NOTES

There are 17-20 Arenga species.

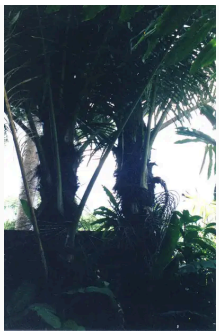
PICTURES



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