PLANT FACT SHEET

Hyphaene coriacea Gaertn.

GENUS *Hyphaene* **FAMILY** Arecaceae

COMMON NAMES Gingerbread palm, Northern lala palm

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: fruit, Palm heart, Sap, Nuts, Vegetable

The pulp of the fruit is eaten. It is also used to make wine.
The palm heart is used as a vegetable.
The sap is tapped to make an alcoholic drink. This is called ilala wine or busulu wine. (The tapping method kills the tree). Caution: Alcohol is a cause of cancer.
The fibrous layer around the nut is eaten. The kernel of the nut is eaten.
The milk from the seed is eaten.
The shoots of the germinating seed are eaten as a vegetable.

DESCRIPTION

A dwarf branched palm. It only branches slightly. It can grow 10 m high. The stem is usually covered with the old leaf bases. The crown is fairly small. The leaves are grey-green, deeply divided and fan shaped. The fruit are pear shaped. They have distinctly narrowed bases. The fruit are drier and smaller than Hyphaene thebaica. They are brown when ripe and about 5 cm long. They have a thin layer of edible flesh.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in the coastal regions of East Africa. In Kenya it grows from sea level to 300 m altitude. It grows along stream banks and in low lying areas. It is usually in areas with a high water table. It suits temperate regions as well as the tropics. It requires well drained soil in a sunny position. It can grow on sand dunes. It suits hardiness zones 10-12. Adelaide Botanical Gardens. In Townsville Queens BG.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seeds. The fleshy layer is removed. Seeds are slow to germinate and breaking the hard seed coat helps germination.

Harvesting and Seed Production

A palm of average size produces 68 litres of sap. Fruit are collected during the dry season.

NOTES

There are about 9 or 10 Hyphaene species. (Some authorities estimate 40).

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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