PLANT FACT SHEET

Nypa fruticans Wurmb.

GENUS *Nypa* **FAMILY** Arecaceae

COMMON NAMES Nypa palm, Mangrove Palm

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Sap, Shoots, Cabbage, Fruit

The young kernel inside the nut is edible. It is normally eaten while immature.
Also the base of the "nut" is chewed.
Sugar (or vinegar) can be obtained by collecting the sap from the fruit stalk. The sap can be used as a coagulant for buffalo milk cheese. It can be boiled down to produce sugar.
Young shoots are eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A palm with stout creeping underground stems. It forms clumps. The stems lie along the ground and are underground in soft mud. The leaves have leaflets along a 7 m long axis. The leaves occur in erect clusters. The leaflets are 0.-1.3 m long by 5-8 cm wide. The fruit are flat and 12 cm long by 10 cm across. They are crowded into a very characteristic large round fruiting head which is borne on a special erect stalk. The female flower is a round head on the end of the stalk and below it long male flowers are produced. The centre of the fruit is edible.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It suits the hot wet tropical lowlands. They occur along tidal streams throughout the Philippines. They thrive in brackish swamps. They occur in tidal mud flats and mangroves. They occur naturally along the Papuan coast of Papua New Guinea but are most likely planted along the North coast.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. Plants can be grown by dividing off suckers. To get the sap to flow in the stalk, the stalk must be banged and shaken then the end cut off and trimmed daily. Tree densities of up to 2,500 palms per hectare occur but only 700-750 are sap producing. Plants are spaced at 1.5-1.7 m giving 390 per hectare where plantings occur. Plants are pollinated by insects therefore contact insecticides need to be avoided. To collect sap the almost full grown head is cut off. About 2 mm of the tip is removed each day during sap collection. Sap flow is increased by banging the trunk and tapping the fruit stalk regularly.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Palms flower and fruit after 3-5 years. Yields of sap of up to 1,500 ml of sap per day per palm over one month can be achieved. Tapping can occur for 50 years. Yields can be 87,000 litres of sap per hectare. Near Kerema in Papua New Guinea it flowers in May and fruits in July. The season is later in the Western Province.

NOTES

There is only one Nypa species.

PICTURES



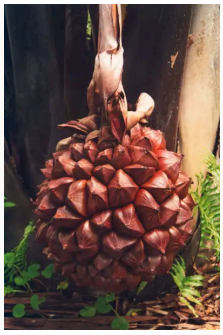
Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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