PLANT FACT SHEET

Carludovica palmata Ruiz & Pavon

GENUS *Carludovica* **FAMILY** Cyclanthaceae

COMMON NAMES Panama hat plant

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: flower, Leaves, Fruit, Rhizome, Root

The young leaves and shoot tips are eaten in salads.
The inner portion of the lower leaf stalk is eaten.
The berries are eaten.
The rhizomes are used as a salad and potherb.
The young flowering stalk is also eaten.
CAUTION: The fruit can contain calcium oxalate crystals that irritate the throat.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen shrub. It is palm like. It is erect and in tufts. It grows 3-4 m high. The leaves are papery and spread out like fingers on a hand. The leaves are in 4 parts and they are 40-80 cm long. The leaf stalk is rigid and has a groove running along it. The flowers grow in a fleshy spike from the ground level. There are 3-4 per plant. They are 10-20 cm long. The flowers are of one sex with both sexes on the one stalk. They are arranged in a spiral around a stalk. The fruit have a reddish, sweet pulp.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It suits moist, humid conditions. It needs fertile, well-drained soil. It is best in light shade. In the Cairns Botanical Gardens. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed or by dividing the clump.

NOTES

There are 3 Carludovica species. The leaves are used to make hats. One million hats are exported from Ecuador each year.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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