PLANT FACT SHEET

Bismarckia nobilis Hildebrandt & H. Wendl.

GENUS *Bismarckia* **FAMILY** Arecaceae

COMMON NAMES Bismarck palm

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Stem - starch, Sago

The stem starch is bitter but can be eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A large fan palm. It can be 60 m tall. It has a single trunk. The trunk is smooth and stout. The crown is large and heavy. The leaf blade may be 3 m across. The leaf stalk continues as a well developed rib into the leaf. The leaflets are spread out like fingers on a hand. The leaflets or segments are rigid and blue-green. The leaf stalk is covered by a woolly, waxy material. The leaf stalk splits are the base where it attaches to the trunk. There are separate male and female trees. The male flowers are very small and on curving crimson spikes. The female flowers are yellow. The fruit are about 3 cm across. They are brown when ripe.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It is native to Madagascar. It suits the drier subtropics. It needs sun and a well drained soil. It suits hardiness zones 10-12. Adelaide Botanical Gardens. It has some salt and drought tolerance. In Townsville palmetum.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Seeds are easy to germinate. Fresh seeds are used and the flesh stripped off. Germination takes 2 months. If it is planted in a pot it needs a deep pot. The seed leaves grow downwards before the tip turns upward. It is not easy to transplants and needs root pruning if transplanted.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is fast growing.

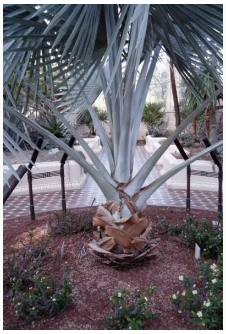
NOTES

There is only one Bismarckia species.

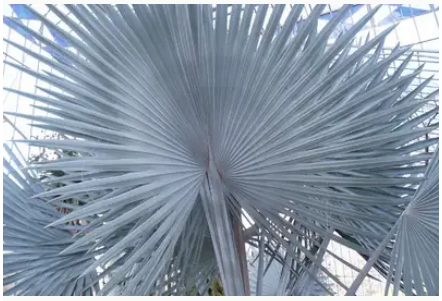
PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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