PLANT FACT SHEET

Dioon edule Lindley

GENUS *Dioon* **FAMILY** Zamiaceae

COMMON NAMES Mexican Fern palm, Edible-seed cycas, Mexican cycad

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds

The seeds yield a starch used as an arrowroot. It is used in tortillas.
The seeds are eaten boiled or roasted.

DESCRIPTION

A medium sized cycad. The trunk can be 3 m long. It can be erect or lie over. It is 30 cm across. The leaves are stiff and form an oblique crown. The leaves are 0.7-1.4 m long. They are broadest near the middle and taper to the end. The leaf stalk is 10-15 cm long. It is swollen at the base and lacks prickles. There are 120-160 leaflets in each leaf. The male cone is 20-40 cm long by 6-10 cm wide. It is like a cylinder. The female cones are 20-35 cm long and 12-20 cm wide. They are oval and hairy. The seeds are 2.5-3.5 cm

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in tropical conditions. It grows in deciduous and oak forests up to 1,500 m above sea level. In Adelaide Botanical Gardens. In the Cairns Botanical Gardens. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown from seed or from offshoots near the base. The seeds need to be stored for 6-8 months before they will germinate.

NOTES

There are 10 Dioon species. They occur in Central America.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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