Carpentaria acuminata
Carpentaria Palm

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

INTRODUCTION

This fast-growing palm tree quickly grows to a height of 40 feet, the smooth grey trunk topped with 10-foot-long, spreading green fronds (Fig. 1). The inconspicuous white flowers appear from spring through fall and are followed by the production of bright red fruits which are less than one-inch-long. The juice from these fruits can cause a skin irritation. Once highly recommended as a replacement for the Christmas Palm which is very susceptible to lethal yellowing disease, Carpentaria Palm apparently requires a richer soil than many landscapes can provide. It is also susceptible to trunk cracks in cool weather, a condition which opens the trunk to decay organisms.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: Carpentaria acuminata
Pronunciation: kar-pen-TAIR-ee-uh ack-yoo-min-NAY-tuh
Common name(s): Carpentaria Palm
Family: Areceae
USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: container or above-ground planter; suitable for growing indoors; near a deck or patio; specimen
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

DESCRIPTION

Height: 35 to 40 feet
Spread: 8 to 10 feet

Figure 1. Mature Carpentaria Palm.

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Carpentaria acuminata -- Carpentaria Palm

Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
Crown shape: palm; upright
Crown density: open
Growth rate: fast
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: spiral
Leaf type: odd pinnately compound
Leaflet margin: entire
Leaflet shape: linear
Leaflet venation: parallel
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaflet blade length: >36 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristics: fall flowering; inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: red
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; no significant litter problem; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: grow mostly upright and will not droop; not particularly showy; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns
Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Crown shaft: yes

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.
Culture

**Light requirement:** tree grows in full sun  
**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; occasionally wet; well-drained  
**Drought tolerance:** moderate  
**Aerosol salt tolerance:** low

Other

**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem  
**Winter interest:** no special winter interest  
**Outstanding tree:** not particularly outstanding  
**Invasive potential:** little, if any, potential at this time  
**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** not known to be susceptible  
**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

**USE AND MANAGEMENT**

Carpentaria Palm is probably best suited for an occasional accent or specimen planting where temperatures stay warm in the winter. A number of them grouped together can be attractive. Choose the best soil on your site for planting this palm.

Carpentaria Palm should be grown in full sun on rich, moist but well-drained, fertile soil, and it has a low tolerance for salt and drought.

Propagation is by seeds.

**Pests**

Thrips.

**Diseases**

No diseases are of major concern.