Coccothrinax argentata
Silverpalm¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

This slow-growing, small, native Florida palm can reach 20 feet in height but is usually seen at 6 to 10 feet with a spread of six feet (Fig. 1). The slender Silverpalm has distinctive dark blue-green, drooping, delicate, deeply divided palmate leaves which have a beautiful silver color beneath, providing a bright glint in the landscape when the leaves sway in the wind. The six-inch-wide trunk is either smooth and grey or is sometimes covered with woven, burlap-like fiber. The small, white flowers are borne in profusion on two-foot-long stalks, hidden among the leaves during the summer. The small, round, purple fruits ripen in late summer and fall.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: Coccothrinax argentata
Pronunciation: koe-koe-THRY-nacks ar-jen-TAY-tuh
Common name(s): Silverpalm, Thatchpalm
Family: Arecaceae
USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)
Origin: native to North America
Uses: container or above-ground planter; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; specimen
Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

DESCRIPTION

Height: 6 to 15 feet
Spread: 6 to 7 feet
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: slow
Texture: coarse

Figure 1. Young Silverpalm.

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² Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.
Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Foliage**

- **Leaf arrangement:** spiral (Fig. 3)
- **Leaf type:** simple
- **Leaf margin:** entire
- **Leaf shape:** star-shaped
- **Leaf venation:** palmate
- **Leaf type and persistence:** broadleaf evergreen; evergreen
- **Leaf blade length:** 18 to 36 inches
- **Leaf color:** blue or blue-green; green; silver
- **Fall color:** no fall color change
- **Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

- **Flower color:** white
- **Flower characteristics:** inconspicuous and not showy; summer flowering

**Fruit**

- **Fruit shape:** round
- **Fruit length:** < .5 inch
- **Fruit covering:** fleshy
- **Fruit color:** purple

**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

**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:** no

**Culture**

- **Light requirement:** tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in the shade; tree grows in full sun
- **Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained
- **Drought tolerance:** high
- **Aerosol salt tolerance:** high
**Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases are of major concern.

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**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:** no pests are normally seen on the tree

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**USE AND MANAGEMENT**

This palm is most suited for residential and commercial landscapes were the unusual blue foliage can be appreciated. It makes a nice accent in a shrub border, and can be massed together to create a dramatic colorful impact. Place it in a low-growing groundcover to provide an exclamation point in the landscape.

Growing in full sun or partial shade, Silverpalm will tolerate any well-drained soil. The palm will grow straight up and provide a beautiful blue accent, even in areas receiving only two or three hours of sun. It is highly salt-tolerant and is especially useful for coastal locations and for soils with a high pH.

Propagation is by seed.