Syagrus romanzoffiana
Queen Palm

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INTRODUCTION

This stately, single-trunked palm is crowned by a beautiful head of glossy, bright green, soft, pinnate leaves forming a graceful, drooping canopy (Fig. 1). The ornamental, bright orange dates are produced in hanging clusters and ripen during the winter months. The dead fronds are persistent and often require pruning to remove. It is popular in commercial or home landscapes planted in rows on 15-foot centers to line a street or walk, in clusters or occasionally as a specimen. The grey trunk is ringed with old leaf scars.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: Syagrus romanzoffiana
Pronunciation: sigh-AY-gruss
roe-man-zoff-ee-AY-nuh
Common name(s): Queen Palm
Family: Arecaceae
USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); specimen; sidewalk cutout (tree pit)
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

DESCRIPTION

Height: 25 to 50 feet
Spread: 15 to 25 feet
Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

Figure 1. Mature Queen Palm.
Crown shape: palm; upright
Crown density: open
Growth rate: fast
Texture: fine

Foliage
Leaf arrangement: alternate
Leaf type: odd pinnately compound
Leaflet margin: entire
Leaflet shape: lanceolate
Leaflet venation: parallel
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaflet blade length: 18 to 36 inches; 12 to 18 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower
Flower color: white
Flower characteristics: showy; spring flowering

Fruit
Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch
Fruit covering: fleshy
Fruit color: orange
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; persistent on the tree; 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: no

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

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

Growing best in full sun, Queen Palm is most suited for acidic, well-drained soils and shows severe mineral deficiencies on alkaline soil. This disfigures the palm by stunting the young leaves and can kill it. Unfortunately, Queen Palm is frequently planted in alkaline soil and requires regular preventive applications of manganese and/or iron to help keep the fronds green. Potassium deficiency is also displayed on older fronds in well-drained soils. Quick-growing Queen Palm responds well to ample moisture and fertilizer and is slightly salt-tolerant. After planting Queen Palm in the landscape, growth is rapid. This palm is not affected by lethal yellowing disease.

Pruning off too many fronds at one time can cause the palm to decline. Growth often slows with new foliage aborting to display distorted leaflets. The trunk is also very susceptible to decay. Prevent injury to the trunk by keeping turf well away from the trunk.

Propagation is by seed and volunteers will often appear under fruiting trees.

Pests

Palm leaf skeletonizer and scale are problems for Queen Palm.

Diseases

Ganoderma butt rot can kill Queen Palm. It probably enters the trunk most often through wounds in the lower trunk and roots. There is no control for butt rot, only prevention.