**Thrinax morrisii**  
**Key Thatch Palm**

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

**INTRODUCTION**

This native North American palm slowly grows 20 to 30 feet tall, its smooth, slender trunk topped with 3 (Fig. 1), 5-foot-wide, beautiful, green and silver fronds. The fronds are a shimmering silver/white underneath and are a source for thatch. The insignificant white spring flowers are followed by small, round, fleshy white fruits.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

- **Scientific name:** *Thrinax morrisii*
- **Pronunciation:** THRY-nacks more-ISS-ee-eye
- **Common name(s):** Key Thatch Palm
- **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; no proven urban tolerance
- **Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

**DESCRIPTION**

- **Height:** 15 to 20 feet
- **Spread:** 6 to 10 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

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**Foliage**

- **Leaf arrangement:** alternate; spiral
- **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
- **Fall color:** no fall color change
- **Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; no significant litter problem; 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 part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun
- **Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic; occasionally wet; alkaline; well-drained
- **Drought tolerance:** high
- **Aerosol salt tolerance:** high
Other

**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem  
**Winter interest:** no special winter interest  
**Outstanding tree:** tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more  
**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

**USE AND MANAGEMENT**

This palm is small enough to be popular in residential landscapes. It is often planted as a single specimen or in groups of three to accent an area. Due to the coarse texture, they make a nice entryway palm planted to attract attention to the front door of a building. It often looks best planted in a mulched area or in a bed with a low-growing ground cover.

Key Thatchpalm should be grown in full sun or partial shade and is highly drought- and salt-tolerant, making it ideal for seaside applications.

Propagation is by seed.

**Pests**

No pests are of major concern.

**Diseases**

No diseases are of major concern.