



Livistona chinensis Chinese Fan Palm¹

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INTRODUCTION

Able to reach 50 feet in height but usually seen at 30 feet with a 10 to 12-foot spread, Chinese Fan Palm has a single straight trunk and large, six-foot-long leaves which have drooping tips (Fig. 1). The divided leaves have long, tapering, ribbon-like segments which gracefully sway beneath the leaves, creating an overall fountain-like effect. The petioles are armed with sharp spines. The inconspicuous flowers are hidden among the leaves and are followed by small, blue-black, olive-like fruits.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Livistona chinensis*

Pronunciation: liv-iss-TOE-nuh chih-NEN-sis

Common name(s): Chinese Fan Palm

Family: *Areaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: suitable for growing indoors; 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); residential street tree; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range



Figure 1. Middle-aged Chinese Fan Palm.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 30 to 50 feet

Spread: 10 to 12 feet

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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: medium

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: spiral (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: costapalmate

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: star-shaped

Leaf venation: palmate

Leaf type and persistence: broadleaf evergreen; evergreen

Leaf blade length: >36 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch; < .5 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: black; blue

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; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns

Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Crown shaft: no

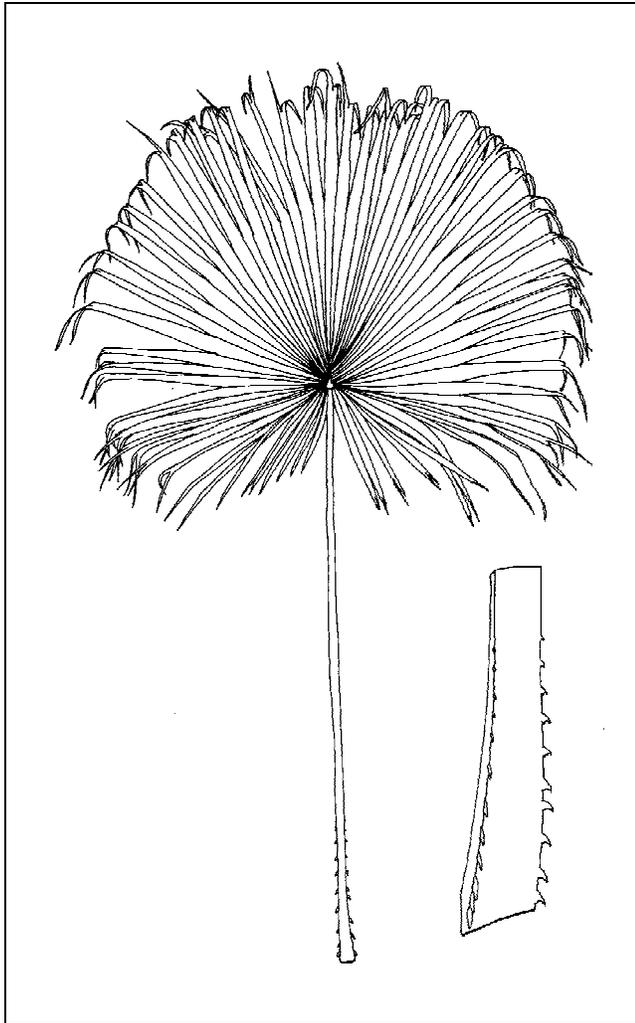


Figure 3. Foliage of Chinese Fan Palm.

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun;
tree grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline;
well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: none

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: very sensitive to one or more pests
or diseases which can affect tree health or aesthetics

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Although Chinese Fan Palm has long been used as a container palm, its neat leaf habit and interesting form make it ideal for further landscape uses, such as in staggered groupings or used as a freestanding specimen, or street tree. They form a closed canopy when planted about ten feet apart along a walk or street. They grow well in confined soil spaces. The palm is self-cleaning of old leaves and will require little or no pruning.

Tolerant of full sun, young specimens of Chinese Fan Palm should be partially shaded. Any reasonably fertile, well-drained soil, including alkaline, is suitable and Chinese Fan Palm should be fertilized two or three times during the year. Plants should be watered during dry spells and will benefit from an organic mulch.

Livistona chinensis subglobosa is a dwarf Chinese Fan Palm.

Propagation is by seed.

Pests

Scales.

Diseases

It is moderately susceptible to lethal yellowing disease.