Old Man Palm

Coccothrinax crinita



Old Man Palm
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 15 feet

Spread: 7 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 9

Other Names: Thatch Palm

Description:

An excellent accent plant for the landscape; attractive, stiff, fan shaped leaves crown a remarkable trunk, covered with wooly, fibrous hairs resembling an old man's beard; likes heat and full sun, must have good drainage

Ornamental Features

Old Man Palm has attractive green evergreen foliage on a tree with the bulk of the canopy held atop a towering trunk or stem. The palmate leaves are highly ornamental and remain green throughout the winter. The fruits are showy deep purple drupes with black overtones, which are displayed in mid summer. The rough dark brown bark is extremely showy and adds significant winter interest.

Landscape Attributes

Old Man Palm is an open evergreen tree with a strong central leader and a towering form, with a high canopy of foliage concentrated at the top of the plant. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other landscape plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance tree, and should not require much pruning, except when necessary, such as to remove dieback. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Disease

Old Man Palm is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Vertical Accent
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Old Man Palm will grow to be about 15 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 7 feet. It has a high canopy with a typical clearance of 6 feet from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. As it matures, the lower branches of this tree can be strategically removed to create a high enough canopy to support unobstructed human traffic underneath. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 30 years.

This tree does best in full sun to partial shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil type or pH, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by cuttings.

Old Man Palm is a fine choice for the yard, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its height, it is often used as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.