Distichous Fishtail Palm

Wallichia disticha



Distichous Fishtail Palm
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 30 feet

Spread: 20 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 9

Other Names: Wallich Palm, False Sugar Palm

Description:

This unusual palm forms a single trunk, with bright green, feathery pinnate leaves, evenly spaced in vertical columns on each side; prune spent leaves only when all green color is gone; flowers and fruits only once, then dies; may grow quite large

Ornamental Features

Distichous Fishtail Palm has attractive forest green evergreen foliage on a tree with the bulk of the canopy held atop a towering trunk or stem. The enormous fan-shaped pinnately compound leaves are highly ornamental and remain forest green throughout the winter. It is draped in stunning clusters of chartreuse flowers hanging below the branches from early to mid summer. The shaggy dark brown bark is extremely showy and adds significant winter interest.

Landscape Attributes

Distichous Fishtail Palm is an 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 strikingly bold and coarse texture can be very effective in a balanced landscape composition.

This is a high maintenance tree that will require regular care and upkeep, and usually looks its best without pruning, although it will tolerate pruning. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Insects
- Spiny

Distichous Fishtail Palm is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Shade
- Vertical Accent
- Hedges/Screening
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Distichous Fishtail Palm will grow to be about 30 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 20 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 3 feet from the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 20 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. This plant should not require much in the way of fertilizing once established, although it may appreciate a shot of general-purpose fertilizer from time to time early in the growing season. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. 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, and parts of it are known to be toxic to humans and animals, so care should be exercised in planting it around children and pets..

Distichous Fishtail 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.