

Butia capitata Pindo Palm¹

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INTRODUCTION

This cold-hardy, single-trunked palm is easily recognized by its rounded canopy of blue-grey, strongly-recurved, graceful fronds which curve in toward the trunk (Fig. 1). The heavy, stocky trunks are covered with persistent leaf bases. Large, showy clusters of orange-yellow, juicy, edible fruits, the size of large dates, are produced and often used to make jams or jellies. The fruit, ripening in summer, can be messy on sidewalks or patios, so you may want to plant 10 feet away from the walk or patio. This slow-growing palm eventually will reach 20 feet tall and is attractive as a freestanding specimen or grouped with other palms. Most are seen smaller than this since growth rate is very slow. Plant 10 feet apart as a street tree and they can be planted beneath power lines due to slow growth and small size.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Butia capitata*

Pronunciation: BEW-tee-uh kap-ih-TAY-tuh

Common name(s): Pindo Palm, Jelly Palm

Family: *Arecaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 8B 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; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); specimen;



Figure 1. Middle-aged Pindo Palm.

residential street tree; tree has been successfully grown in urban areas where air pollution, poor drainage, compacted soil, and/or drought are common

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 15 to 25 feet
Spread: 10 to 15 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

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: spiral (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: odd pinnately compound
Leaflet margin: entire
Leaflet shape: linear
Leaflet venation: parallel
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaflet blade length: 18 to 36 inches
Leaf color: blue or blue-green; silver
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; yellow
Fruit characteristics: attracts squirrels and other mammals; suited for human consumption; 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

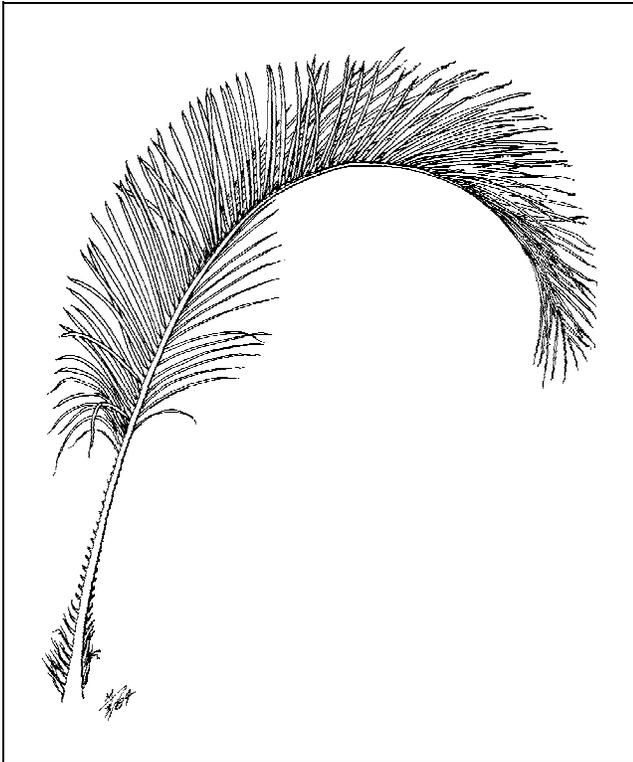


Figure 3. Foliage of Pindo Palm.

Propagation is by seed which take many months for germination.

Pests

Palm leaf skeletonizer, scale, and micronutrient deficiencies (especially Mn and Fe) are occasional problems for pindo palm. Micronutrient deficiencies only show up on soil with a high pH.

Diseases

No diseases are of major concern. The roots and lower trunk can rot if soil is kept too moist.

Culture

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

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline;
acidic; 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: 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 in full sun or part shade on a wide variety of soils, including alkaline, pindo palm is moderately salt-tolerant. Pindo palm can survive hot, windy conditions, asphalt and concrete areas but looks better in good soil with adequate moisture. Some people do not consider this a pretty palm but it certainly will grow anywhere.