Chamaedorea erumpens

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Introduction

This small, delicate, multiple-trunked palm produces clumps of bamboo-like canes having lacy, pinnate, drooping fronds (Fig. 1). New stems continually form at the base of the plant keeping it full of fine-textured foliage. Bright green canes grow up to one-half inch in diameter. Since older leaves die and hang onto the stem, they require manual removal to keep the plant looking neat. The individual dark green leaflets are almost papery and the last few leaflets at the tip of the leaf are several times wider than others on the leaf.

General Information

Scientific name: Chamaedorea erumpens
Pronunciation: kam-ee-DOR-ee-uh ee-RUM-penz
Common name(s): Bamboo Palm
Family: Palmae
Plant type: palm
USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: screen; container or above-ground planter; border; mass planting; suitable for growing indoors; accent
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: 4 to 12 feet
Spread: 3 to 5 feet
Plant habit: upright; palm

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: spiral
Leaf type: even-pinnately compound

Figure 1. Bamboo Palm.
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: lanceolate
Leaf venation: parallel
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristic: flowers periodically throughout the year

Fruit

Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: less than .5 inch
Fruit cover: fleshy
Fruit color: black
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
Current year stem/twig color: green
Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in the shade
Soil tolerances: slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam
Drought tolerance: moderate
Soil salt tolerances: poor
Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: sprouts from roots or lower trunk
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests
Use and Management

Native to the dense rain forests of Central America, Bamboo Palm needs rich, fibrous, well-drained moist soil and a shady location. Usually relegated to interior house plant containers, Bamboo Palm is striking when used around outdoor fountains or ponds where it will thrive in the shade and wind protection of taller plantings. It makes a delicate, fine-textured accent in a shrub border or in a low-growing groundcover.

Propagation is by seed or division of the clumps.

Scale and spider mites can become serious pest problems, especially when used indoors.

Pests and Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.

Figure 3. Foliage of Bamboo Palm