



Acoelorrhaphe wrightii Paurotis Palm¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

This striking fan palm has several to many showy, upright, slender trunks which form attractive tight clumps with multiple suckers clustered at the base (Fig. 1). This ensures that there are trunks of different heights on the palm at all times if suckers are not pruned off. Remove the suckers to prevent formation of additional trunks. The two to three-foot-wide fronds are green above and silvery below borne on orange-green, armed petioles. Black, 0.25-inch fruit are borne on bright orange stalks which can be quite showy in the fall. Eventually reaching a height of 25 feet with a variable spread, the slow-growing Paurotis Palm is highly desirable in the landscape. Paurotis Palm is exceptionally attractive with nighttime lighting from below.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Acoelorrhaphe wrightii*

Pronunciation: ah-see-loe-RAY-fee RITE-ee-eye

Common name(s): Paurotis Palm

Family: *Arecaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; reclamation plant; specimen

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range



Figure 1. Middle-aged Paurotis Palm.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 15 to 25 feet

Spread: 10 to 15 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-58, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: November 1993.
2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Crown shape: palm; upright

Crown density: open

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: star-shaped

Leaf venation: palmate

Leaf type and persistence: broadleaf evergreen; evergreen

Leaf blade length: 18 to 36 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white; yellow

Flower characteristics: showy; spring flowering; winter flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: < .5 inch

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: black

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; no significant litter problem; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; grow mostly upright and will not droop; showy trunk; no thorns

Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Crown shaft: no

Culture

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

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

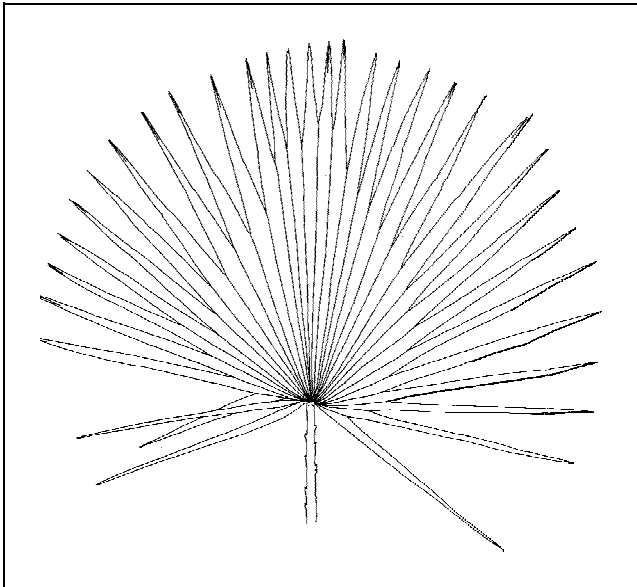


Figure 3. Foliage of Paurotis Palm.

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerance: moderate

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: no pests are normally seen on the tree

USE AND MANAGEMENT

A native of the Florida Everglades, Paurotis Palm is hardy to about 25 to 28-degrees F. and prefers rich, moist locations. Growing in full sun or partial shade, growth is considerably slower in drier soils and could decline and die without irrigation on a dry, well-drained site. Paurotis Palm is tolerant of salt spray. It is popular as an accent or specimen for large residential, commercial or municipal landscapes where this beautiful palm can be seen in an open setting. Unfortunately, it grows slowly and is hard to come by in the trade. Set it in a bed of plumbago or other sprawling shrub or groundcover to create a striking accent.

Propagation is by seed.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern. Paurotis Palm is susceptible to chlorosis from micronutrient deficiencies (especially Mn) when grown in soil with a high pH. It also shows potassium deficiencies.