



Bismarckia nobilis Bismarck Palm¹

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INTRODUCTION

Lending a tropical flair to the landscape, Bismarck Palm slowly reaches 25 to 50 feet or more in height and is topped with gorgeous, four-foot-long and wide, stiff, waxy, blue/gray leaves (Fig. 1). These palms cannot be missed in the landscape due to the very striking frond color and texture. The flower stalks are four feet long and produce many 1.5-inch-long fruits.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Bismarckia nobilis*

Pronunciation: biz-MAR-kee-uh no-BILL-iss

Common name(s): Bismarck Palm

Family: *Areaceae*

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

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: suitable for growing indoors; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; specimen

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

DESCRIPTION

Height: 40 to 70 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

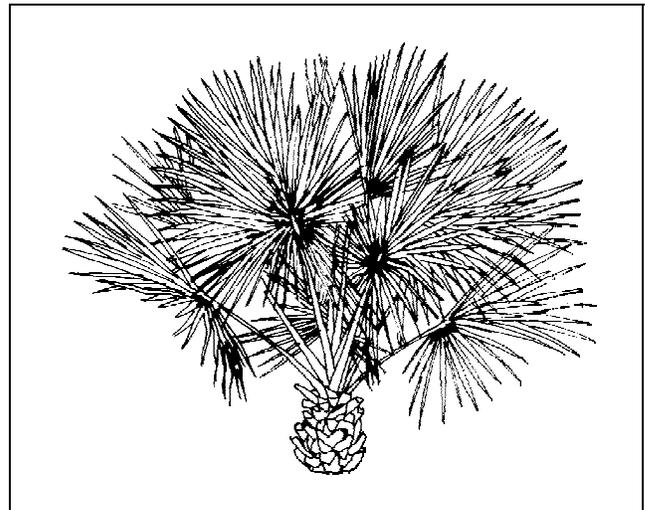


Figure 1. Young Bismarck Palm.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: spiral (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: lobed

Leaf shape: star-shaped

Leaf venation: palmate

Leaf type and persistence: broadleaf evergreen; evergreen

Leaf blade length: >36 inches

Leaf color: blue or blue-green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit covering: fleshy

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

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: grow mostly upright and will not droop; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; 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; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

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

Several of these palms placed together in a commercial or large residential setting can contrast dramatically with existing vegetation, providing a

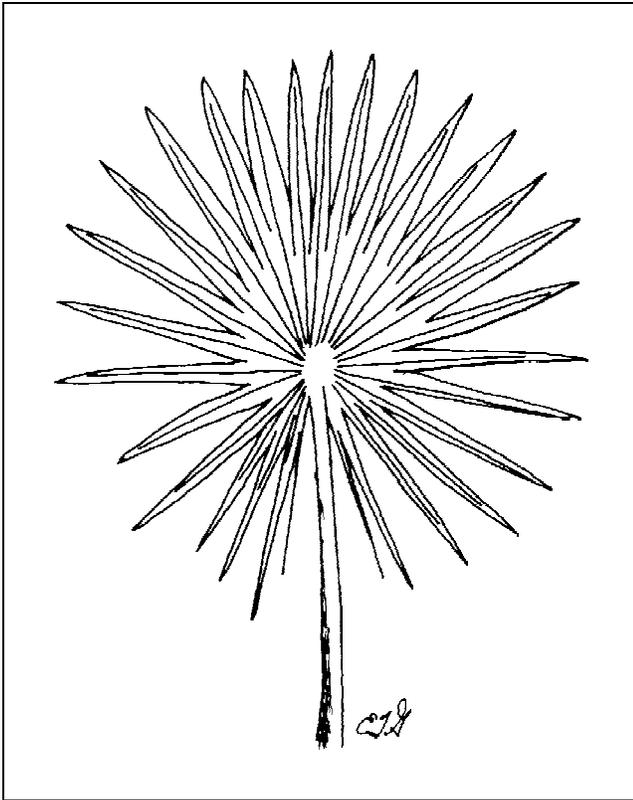


Figure 3. Foliage of Bismarck Palm.

wonderful relief from the greens so common in most landscapes. Single specimens are also attractive and well suited for most residential-sized landscapes. A row of Bismarck Palms spaced 15 feet apart along each side of an entry road or wide walkway can create a dramatic impact. Even if you do not collect palms, this one should be considered when planning a landscape in USDA hardiness zones 10 and 11.

Bismarck Palm should be grown in full sun or partial shade on well-drained soil. This palm is highly drought- and salt-tolerant and is becoming more popular. As is the case with a number of palms, it cannot be transplanted until a trunk develops and is visible at the base of the plant.

Propagation is by seed.

Pests and Diseases

There are no major pest problems on this palm. Watch for scale infestations.