



Ptychosperma macarthurii Macarthur Palm¹

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INTRODUCTION

This attractive small palm is noted for its multiple, slim, ringed grey trunks which are topped with soft green, feathery, flat, broad leaves with tips that appear jagged and torn (Fig. 1). Although able to reach 30 feet in height, Macarthur Palm is most often seen 10 to 15 feet in height with a variable spread. The two-foot-long, branched flower stalks hang below the crownshaft throughout the year and contain small, white blooms. These blooms give way to bright red, showy sprays of half-inch-long fruits which ripen year-round.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Ptychosperma macarthurii*

Pronunciation: tye-koe-SPER-muh
mack-ar-THUR-ee-eye

Common name(s): Macarthur Palm

Family: *Areaceae*

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

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; suitable for growing indoors; near a deck or patio; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

DESCRIPTION

Height: 15 to 25 feet

Spread: 6 to 10 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

Crown shape: palm; upright

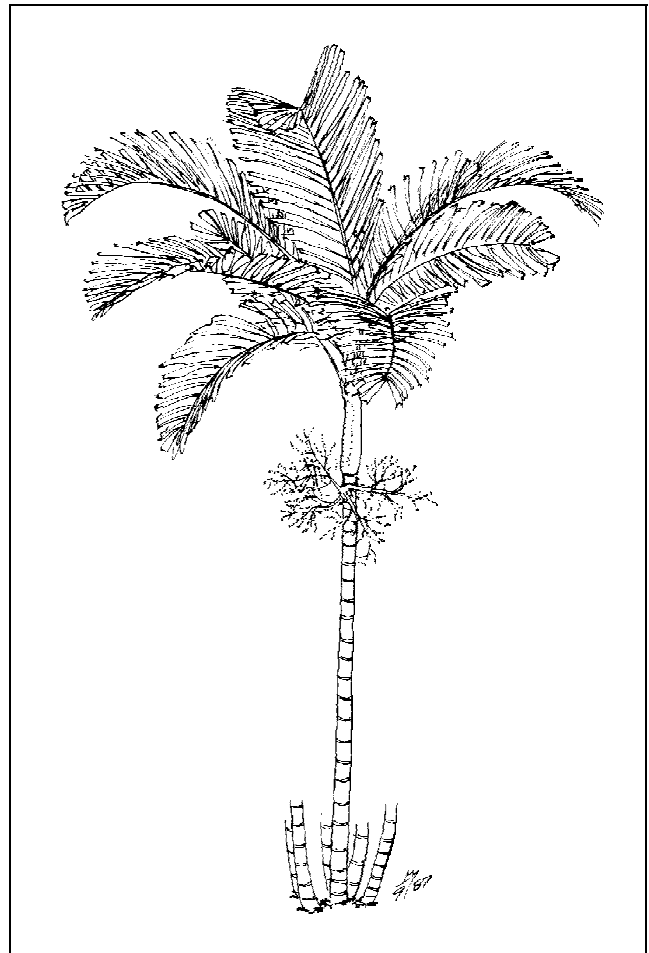


Figure 1. Middle-aged Macarthur Palm.

Crown density: open

Growth rate: medium

Texture: medium

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

- Leaf arrangement:** spiral (Fig. 3)
- Leaf type:** odd pinnately compound
- Leaflet margin:** entire; incised
- Leaflet shape:** linear; oblong; obovate
- Leaflet venation:** parallel
- Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen
- Leaflet blade length:** 8 to 12 inches
- Leaf color:** green
- Fall color:** no fall color change
- Fall characteristic:** not showy

Flower

- Flower color:** white
- Flower characteristics:** fall flowering; pleasant fragrance; inconspicuous and not showy; summer flowering

Fruit

- Fruit shape:** oval; round
- Fruit length:** .5 to 1 inch
- Fruit covering:** fleshy
- Fruit color:** red

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; no significant litter problem; persistent on the tree; 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:** yes

Culture

- Light requirement:** tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in the shade; tree grows in full sun
- Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained
- Drought tolerance:** high
- Aerosol salt tolerance:** low
- Soil salt tolerance:** poor

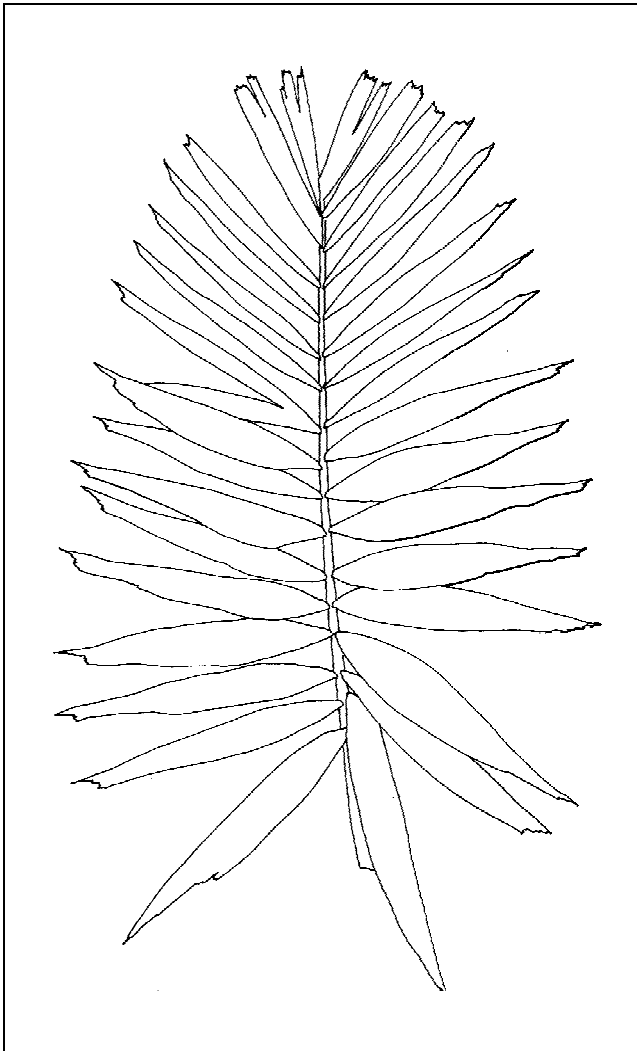


Figure 3. Foliage of Macarthur Palm.

Macarthur Palm prefers partial shade but will tolerate full sun or dense shade on any well-drained soil. Abundant moisture will allow it to look its best because it will keep more leaves.

Propagation is by seed.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern. This palm is lethal yellowing-resistant. Sooty mold sometimes coats the trunk.

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

Macarthur Palm is often used in planters or urns but quickly outgrows these containers. It makes a striking lighted nighttime specimen, and is ideal for accenting shaded, sheltered locations, such as entranceways and patios. It is often planted in groups with individual trees several feet apart.