



# *Ravenala madagascariensis* Travelers-Tree<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

Traveler's-Tree is ideal for creating an exotic, tropical effect with its very large, banana-like leaves, each up to nine feet long and held in fan-shaped formation, and the unusual, small, white flowers which are held erect in canoe-shaped bracts (Fig. 1). Leaves are usually seen tattered and torn from exposure to the wind. Traveler's-Tree will reach a height of 30 feet and a spread of 18 feet, growing at a moderate rate. It makes a nice tropical accent in a large landscape, growing too large for most modest-sized yards. The common name is derived from the fact that weary travelers would quench their thirst on the rainwater collected in the enlarged sheaths at the base of the leaves.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scientific name:** *Ravenala madagascariensis*

**Pronunciation:** rav-eh-NAY-luh  
mad-uh-gas-kar-ee-EN-sis

**Common name(s):** Travelers-Tree

**Family:** *Strelitziaceae*

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

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** container or above-ground planter; near a deck or patio; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

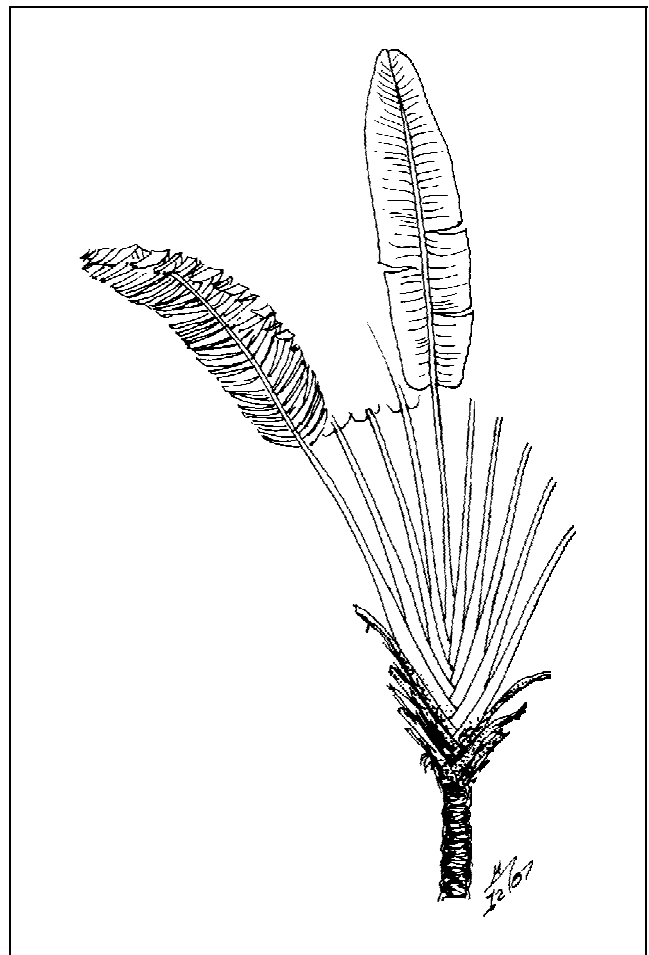


Figure 1. Middle-aged Travelers-Tree.

## DESCRIPTION

**Height:** 15 to 25 feet

**Spread:** 15 to 18 feet

**Crown uniformity:** irregular outline or silhouette

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Crown shape:** palm; upright  
**Crown density:** open  
**Growth rate:** medium  
**Texture:** coarse

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** entire  
**Leaf shape:** oblong  
**Leaf venation:** pinnate  
**Leaf type and persistence:** broadleaf evergreen; evergreen  
**Leaf blade length:** >36 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** no fall color change  
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

### Flower

**Flower color:** white  
**Flower characteristics:** fall flowering; showy; spring flowering; summer flowering

### Fruit

**Fruit length:** .5 to 1 inch; < .5 inch  
**Fruit covering:** dry or hard  
**Fruit color:** brown  
**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

### 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:** requires pruning to develop 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:** moderate

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** none

### **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

**Pest resistance:** very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect tree health or aesthetics

## **USE AND MANAGEMENT**

Traveler's-Tree will produce best growth in full sun, though small potted plants may be grown in shade for a period of time. Plants should be grown on fertile soils, high in organic matter, and routinely cared for. Plants should be grown only in frost-free locations.

Propagation is by division of basal suckers or by seed, which are slow to germinate.

### **Pests**

No pests are of major concern.

### **Diseases**

Cercospora leaf-spot is a very serious disease problem.