

Howea forsteriana: Sentry Palm¹

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Introduction

Capable of reaching a height of 40 feet but often seen much shorter, this slow-growing palm has a slim, six-inch-diameter, showy, green trunk. The trunk resembles bamboo. The graceful, dark green fronds have a smooth, neat appearance, unencumbered by spines or rough bark. Often used as an urn or interior plant, Sentry Palm serves well as a small framing or specimen tree in a shady location.

General Information

Scientific name: *Howea forsteriana*

Pronunciation: HOW-ee-uh for-stair-ee-AY-nuh

Common name(s): Sentry Palm, Kentia Palm

Family: *Arecaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Uses: indoors; deck or patio; specimen; container or planter

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

Description

Height: 15 to 25 feet

Spread: 6 to 10 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical

Crown shape: palm, upright/erect

Crown density: open

Growth rate: slow

Texture: coarse

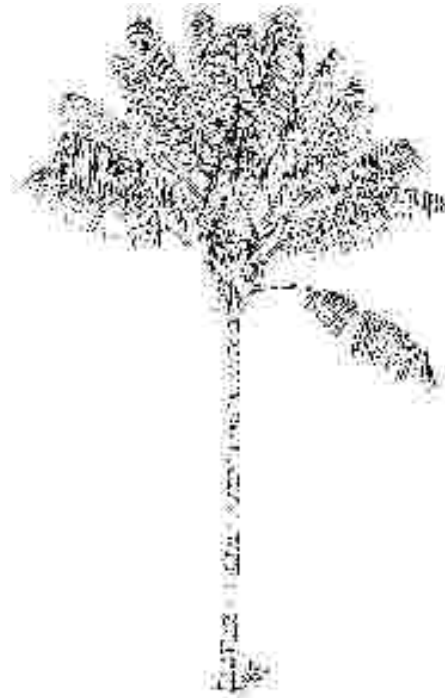


Figure 1. Middle-aged *Howea forsteriana*: Sentry Palm

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: spiral (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: odd-pinnately compound

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: lanceolate

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 12 to 18 inches

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Figure 2. Range

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white/cream/gray

Flower characteristics: not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: round, oval

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit covering: fleshy

Fruit color: yellow, red

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; not showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches don't droop; showy; typically one trunk; thorns

Pruning requirement: little required

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: not applicable

Current year twig thickness:

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: partial sun or partial shade, shade tolerant

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

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: none

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: no

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: resistant

Pest resistance: sensitive to pests/diseases

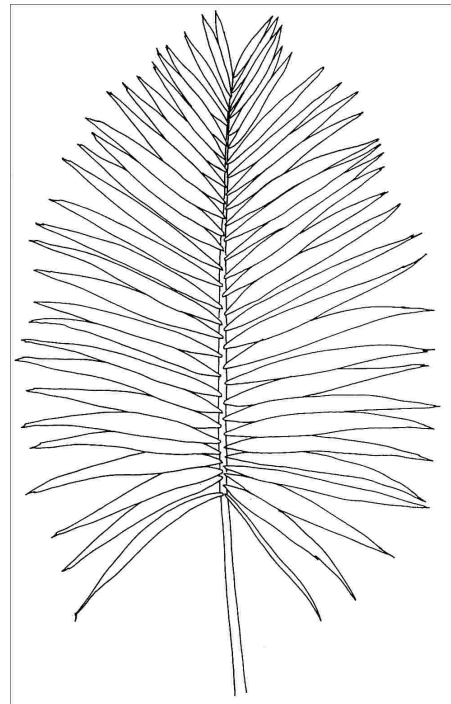


Figure 3. Foliage

Use and Management

Sentry Palm requires partial to deep shade when young, and fertile, well-drained soils. It is not salt-tolerant. It should be protected from frost, winds, and keep lawn grasses away from the root system. It makes a nice house plant if it is not overwatered.

Propagation is by seed.

Pests

Scale.

Diseases

Lethal yellowing disease.