**Introduction**

This clump-growing group of palms has medium green leaf blades which are divided into many segments, each of which resembles the tail of a fancy goldfish. Rarely exceeding 25 feet in height, a number of species of fishtail palms produce suckers from the base creating a very attractive specimen palm. Its neat habit makes it ideal for use at poolside, in urns or other containers, and it is often seen in well-lit interiorscapes where its distinct form lends a tropical effect. It can be used as a house plant in large homes with plenty of light.

**General Information**

- **Scientific name:** Caryota spp.
- **Pronunciation:** kair-ee-OH-tuh species
- **Common name(s):** Fishtail palm
- **Family:** Arecaceae
- **USDA hardiness zones:** 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)
- **Origin:** not native to North America
- **Invasive potential:** little invasive potential
- **Uses:** indoors; specimen; deck or patio; container or planter; screen
- **Availability:** not native to North America

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**Description**

Height: 15 to 25 feet  
Spread: 10 to 15 feet  
Crown uniformity: irregular  
Crown shape: palm, upright/erect  
Crown density: moderate  
Growth rate: moderate  
Texture: coarse

**Foliage**

Leaf arrangement: spiral (Fig. 3)  
Leaf type: odd-pinnately compound  
Leaf margin: incised  
Leaf shape: obovate  
Leaf venation: reticulate  
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen  
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches, 4 to 8 inches  
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  
Fruit length: less than .5 inch  
Fruit covering: unknown  
Fruit color: brown  
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; not showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

**Trunk and Branches**

Trunk/bark/branches: branches don’t droop; not showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns

**Pruning requirement:** little required  
**Breakage:** resistant  
**Current year twig color:** not applicable  
**Current year twig thickness:**  
**Wood specific gravity:** unknown

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** full sun, partial sun, or partial shade, shade tolerant  
**Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; loam; alkaline; acidic; well-drained  
**Drought tolerance:** moderate  
**Aerosol salt tolerance:** low

**Other**

**Roots:** not a problem  
**Winter interest:** no  
**Outstanding tree:** no  
**Ozone sensitivity:** unknown  
**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** resistant  
**Pest resistance:** sensitive to pests/diseases

**Use and Management**

Fishtail palms can thrive in light conditions from full sun to deep shade, requiring only that its soil be well-drained and reasonably fertile. It has a moderate to rapid growth rate and should be located outdoors in a sheltered location protected from cold. Unfortunately, the palm is susceptible to lethal yellowing disease. In addition, it is monocarpic so a stem dies after it flowers. This stem must be removed to maintain a neat appearance. There are a variety of other species grown in south Florida nurseries.

Propagation is by seeds or division.

**Pests**

Red spider mites and scales are serious problems, especially when fishtail palms are used indoors.

**Diseases**

Lethal yellowing disease.