

Chamaedorea elegans Parlor Palm, Neanthe Bella¹

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Introduction

This palm, native of the dense rain forests of Mexico and Guatemala, is one of the best indoor chamaedoreas, tolerating crowded roots and low light levels (Fig. 1). Since lower leaves drop from the plant as it grows, older palms have all their foliage on top of the bright green, shiny stem. It grows five to eight feet tall but is usually kept smaller by pruning the stem back nearly to the ground. Growing very slowly, this pale green, single-stemmed palm is most effective when potted three or more to a container. It can also be an effective accent plant in a ground hugging ground cover in a small scale garden. While excellent when used for a house plant, parlor palm can also be used outdoors in a shady understory setting as an accent. The showy stems are bright green.

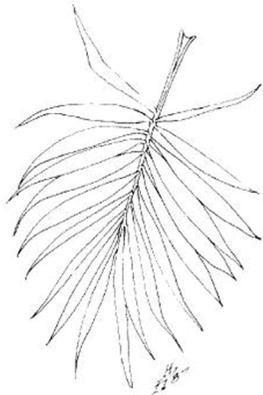


Figure 1. Parlor palm.

General Information

Scientific name: *Chamaedorea elegans*

Pronunciation: kam-ee-DOR-ee-uh EL-uh-ganz

Common name(s): parlor palm, neanthe bella

Family: *Arecacea*

Plant type: palm

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

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; suitable for growing indoors; border; accent

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



Figure 2. No diseases are of major concern.

Description

Height: 4 to 8 feet

Spread: 2 to 3 feet

Plant habit: palm; upright

Plant density: open

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Growth rate: slow

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: even-pinnately compound

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: lanceolate

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristic: flowers periodically throughout the year

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: less than .5 inch

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: black

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: showy; usually with one stem/trunk

Current year stem/twig color: green

Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in the shade

Soil tolerances: slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Plant spacing: 18 to 24 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Organic soil is preferred, and parlor palm should be fertilized regularly. Best growth occurs in shaded locations away from direct sunlight.

Propagation is by seed.

Pests and Diseases

Mites, nematodes, and scales can be a problem, especially when used indoors.

No diseases are of major concern.