

Pseudophoenix sargentii: Buccaneer Palm¹

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Introduction

This publication is intended for anyone interested in identifying and utilizing this Florida native palm in their landscape. *Pseudophoenix sargentii* is native to the Caribbean, Belize, Mexico (Quintana Roo), and Navassa Island. This palm is widely adapted to south Florida soils, is salt tolerant, and grows well in full sunlight. It prefers basic sandy soil but underperforms in acidic soils. As an attractive palm with blue-gray fronds and an erect trunk, this palm would make a beautiful addition to any landscape, but its slow growth and lack of cold tolerance have prevented it from being widely utilized in Florida landscapes.

General Information

Scientific name: *Pseudophoenix sargentii*

Pronunciation: soo-do-FEE-nix sar-JEN-tee-eye

Common name: buccaneer palm, cherry palm

Family: Arecaceae (palm family)

Subfamily: Ceroxyloideae

Plant type: small tree

USDA hardiness zones: 10 to 11 (Figure 1)

Cold hardy: intolerant

Origin: Florida Keys, Bahamas, Cuba, Hispaniola, Yucatan Peninsula, Belize, Dominica

UF/IFAS Invasive Assessment Status: native

Attractant: bees, insects, birds, mammals, others

Uses: small tree (10 to 25 feet), container palm, seaside landscape

Availability: native species

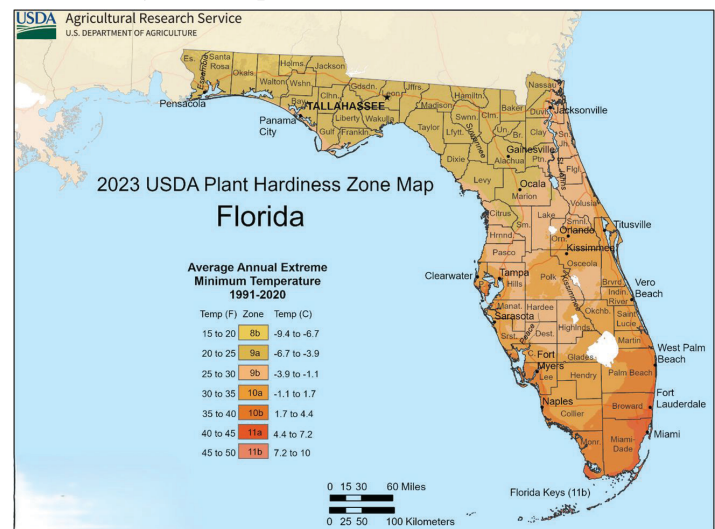


Figure 1. USDA Hardiness zones for Florida. For alternative viewing, visit this link to find zones for exact locations by interacting anywhere on the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map: <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/>.

Credits: Adapted from the U.S. Department of Agriculture

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Description

Height: up to 25 feet

Habit: solitary

Plant density: 7 to 16 fronds (leaves)

Crownshaft: short, blue green, glaucous, tapered (1 foot)

Growth rate: slow

Hazard: None

Foliage

Leaf type: pinnate-leaved, reduplicate, stiff, and tip-pointed.

Leaf size: 7 to 9 feet long; petiole 2 to 3 feet long

Leaf color: Blue green



Figure 2. *Pseudophoenix sargentii* with inflorescence. Montgomery Botanical Center.

Credits: Mica McMillan, UF/IFAS



Figure 3. *Pseudophoenix sargentii*. Montgomery Botanical Center.

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Flower

Flower color: Green yellowish

Inflorescence: 3 to 4 feet, emerges from among the leaves

Fruit

Fruit size: ½ inch

Fruit color: red

Fruit characteristics: none

Irritant: no

Trunk

Trunk characteristics: 4 to 10 inches in diameter; gray green with brown leaf scars that are very evident when young and then fade to a gray color when older; bulge in the trunk is unique to each palm

Culture

Light requirement: high

Soil tolerances: widely adaptable

Drought tolerance: high

Salt tolerance: high

Soil pH: acidic to very alkaline

Hurricane tolerance: high

Other

Nutritional requirements: low

Human hazards: none

Uses and Management

This palm is ideal as a stand-alone specimen and for seaside landscapes. It grows slowly but is drought tolerant.

Propagation is by seed.

Pests and Diseases

Pests: none

Diseases: none

References

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