

Roystonea regia

Systematic Position

Kingdom: Plantae

Phylum: Magnoliophyta

Class: Liliopsida

Order: Arecales

Family: Arecaceae

Genus: *Roystonea*

Species: *Roystonea regia*

Popular names: Royal Palm, Bottle palm

Nature: Tree

Plant distribution: Native to Florida and the Caribbean region

Flowering and Fruiting Time: March onwards

Gardening notes:

1. Light: Partial shade to Full sun.
2. Moisture: Moderate, moderately drought tolerant
3. Soil: Soil can be clay, sand, or loam.
4. Propagation: From seeds. it takes about 2 months to germinate

Economic importance:

1. An oil is obtained from the seed
2. The leaves are used for thatching
3. The trunks are cut into planks and used in construction and to make wharf piles and canoes



Plant description:

Stem: The Royal Palm can get up to 60 – 70ft tall and 5 -10 ft wide with a growth rate of around a foot each year. Fragrant, yellow flowers bloom in the summer. Evergreen leaf-blades reaching 18 to 36 inches top a crown shaft that is long and green. Purple to black half-inch fruits is showy but not edible.

Leaves: Very large, leaf sheath elongate, tightly enveloping the vegetative cone. Leaflets firmly papyraceous, ensiform, quite straight and very gradually narrow above from below the middle, to a very acuminate, rather rigid, briefly bifid apex. Spathes 2, the exterior one tubular, pervious at its upper end, considerably shorter than the interior one.

Inflorescence: Spadices 3-4 at the same time, primary branches conspicuously swollen at their bases and divided into several alternate flowering branchlets, which are slender, terete, more or less sinuous between the flowers.

Flowers : Male Flowers- Considerably larger than the female, irregularly ovoid, obtuse, calyx very small with slightly imbricate, scarious, subpellucid, sub-deltoid, obtuse or acute, and more or less carinate sepals, petals considerably longer than the sepals, concave irregularly ovate-oblong or oblong-elliptical , bluntish or subacute, striately veined. Stamens usually 6-7, occasionally 8-9, about as long as the petals, anthers relatively large, slightly shorter than the filaments, filaments linear subulate at the apex, rudimentary ovary globose with 3 short acute stigmatic points.

Female Flowers : open a short time after the male, horizontal, sepals reniform, entire, smooth, slightly callous at the base, corolla four times as long as the calyx, staminodes forming a cup, lining the undivided part of the corolla, and crowned by 6 obtuse lobes, 3 of them peeping forth between the divisions of the corolla. Ovary globose, usually uni-cellular, stigmas fleshy, triangular-subulate, recurved.

Fruit: Globose-obovoid, and somewhat gibbous. Seed broadly ovoid-elliptical, rounded at both ends.

Seed: Purple to black half-inch fruits is showy but not edible.



Figure: (A) Green crown shaft, (B) Pinnately compound venation (C) inflorescence, (D) Flower, (E) Fruit, (F) seed