



Alexandra Palm

ID # 297



Provides a feast for our native fauna



The fruit of the Alexandra palm is eaten by many bird species: the metallic starling (*Aplonis metallica*) that descend as a flock to consume all the ripe fruits within an hour; Torresian imperial pigeon (*Ducula spilorrhoa*); wompoo fruit-dove (*Ptilinopus magnificus*). Fruits are also eaten by the spectacled headed flying fox (*Pteropus conspicillatus*), the grey-headed flying fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*), the musky rat-kangaroo (*Hypsiprymnodon moschatus*) and the bush rat (*Rattus fuscipes*). Nectar is favoured by Eungella honeyeaters (*Bolemoreus hindwood*) while the flowers attract pollinators.

Uses

Now widely used as a garden and ornamental plant in tropical and subtropical regions of the world, singularly or in groups. Also in pots in semi-indoor environments. Has potential to become an invasive species.

Indigenous Uses

The palms have many uses from making spears to the fruit and leaf bases being eaten. The *Kuku Yalanji* people of FNQ ate the palm heart of this species.

Family: *Arecaceae*

Genus: *Archontophoenix*

Botanic name: *Archontophoenix alexandrae*

The genus name is derived from the Ancient Greek *archontos*, meaning "chieftain" or "ruler", combined with the palm genus *phoenix*, and refers to the regal stature of the trees. The species epithet is given in honour of Princess Alexandra of Denmark but is often erroneously referred to by the misnomer "Alexander Palm", an entirely different palm

Also known as: Alexandra, Alexander, King Palm, Northern Bangalow Palm

Origin: Native to Northern and Central Queensland, from Cape York to the Tropic of Capricorn. Cultivated and now grows prolifically across Southern Queensland and areas of northern New South Wales. Classed as an environmental weed in Brisbane due to displacing endemic Bangalow palms.

Habitat: Grows along water courses in rainforest or lowland swamps on the coast and inland from sea level to an altitude of 600m. Capacity to tolerate heavy inundation under heavy rain events has made the palm a dominant species in tropical Queensland.

Description: A solitary feather palm that grows to an average height of 15m. Slender greyish single trunk to 6-10m, with a swollen base. A spreading crown with up to a dozen graceful dark green fronds that cluster at the top, with a smooth green crown shaft.



The creamy white flowers appear in a pendant cluster during summer, growing directly off the trunk below the level of the palm fronds, up to 1m and 50cm wide. The flower-clusters bear initially green berries that develop a bright red colouring as they ripen. This fleshy covering drops and the fruits open to reveal fibrous brown innards.



Propagation and cultivation: Propagate from seed with germination occurring in as little as six weeks. Bugs and insects can be a problem including spider mites, leaf spot or other palm insects. Birds and animals assist in seed dispersal, as well as in waterways.

Sources:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archontophoenix_alexandrae
- <https://brisbanetrees.com.au/alexander-palm/>
- https://www.plantfileonline.net/plants/plant_details/22