



Wine or Jelly Palm

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With a delightful tart guava-banana-pineapple-nutty taste, the edible fruits are used to make jelly because they contain a good amount of pectin – hence Jelly Palm. That same pectin makes a cloudy wine, the other common use and name for the plant, Wine Palm.

The pulp is also a good source of beta-carotene and provitamin A compared with other fruits usually consumed.



Interesting facts

It is a genus of about eight species first scientifically described in 1826 as *Cocos capitata* in the *Historia Naturalis Palmarum* by Carl Friedrich Philipp von Martius who described and illustrated the palm from sketches.



There is a stand of *Butia Capitata* in the National Arboretum in Canberra.

Family: *Arecaceae*

Genus: *Butia*

Botanic name: *Butia capitata*

Butia is a Portuguese corruption of an aboriginal term meaning “spiny”; *capitata* is Latin, meaning “with a dense head” referring to the seed heads

Also known as: Wine or Jelly Palm

So named because its seeds have edible fruit around them that many say taste like wine and jelly.

Indigenous names: Pindo or Yatay, coquinho-azedo or butiá in (northern) Minas Gerais

Origin: South America. Native to Brazil with its origins going back to the Andes Mountains. It ranges across northern Argentina, southern Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Habitat: It prefers its surroundings to be dry if the temperature is cold. It is drought resistant.

Description: The Jelly Palm is a type of palm that is best known for its thick trunk. In fact, among all palms, the Jelly Palm has the thickest trunk to date. It’s a long living palm (over 20 years) and slow growing up to 20m. It’s the hardiest feather-leaved palm in cultivation and has beautiful blue-green leaves that are strongly curved making it instantly recognisable.

It flowers from May to July and is in fruit from November to February. The flowers are yellow and orange and large stalks of golden fruit in clusters. The fruit is green before it ripens, then turns golden, sometimes having a reddish tinge when ready to eat. Soft, tasty flesh surrounds a hard seed that looks like a miniature coconut.



Propagation and cultivation: From seed.

Uses: Commercially the fruit is used in jellies, jams, marmalades, and for making wine, juices, liquor and ice cream. An oil can be extracted from the nuts which is quite similar to coconut oil. The pulp of the fruit is bright orange, highly aromatic, somewhat oily, and quite fibrous. Some people can swallow the fibre and have no problems, in others it can upset stomachs. So, chewing the fruit and spitting out the fibre is accepted practice.



Sources:

- www.palmsonline.com.au
- www.daleysfruit.com.au
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Butia_capitata