

Jubaea chilensis (J.I. Molina) H.E. Baillon

Chilean Wine Palm

(*Cocos chilensis*, *Jubaea spectabilis*, *Micrococos chilensis*, *Palma chilensis*)

- This South American species is also known as Chilean Coco Palm, Coco De Chile, Coquito Palm, Honey Palm, Little Cokernut, Palma Chilena, Palma De Conquitos, Palmera Coquito, Syrup Palm, or Wine Palm; *Jubaea chilensis* is very closely related to *B. capitata*, sharing its origins from South America and a similar stoutness of trunk and color to the foliage; the blue-green to silver-green foliage consists of arching to spreading pinnate fronds 6' to 12' long with reduplicate 2' long by 1" wide segments; the base of the stalks are filiferous to shredded similar to *B. capitata*; in youth it is hard to distinguish from *B. capitata*; Chilean Wine Palm grows very slowly to a height of 80' or more with massive trunks 4' to 6' in diameter in its native Chile, the source of the specific epithet "chilensis", but usually matures at less than 40' in our region; mature trunks are dark gray with diamond-shaped frond scars; its overall texture is medium-coarse to coarse; dioecious flowers are purplish in color, producing 1¼" yellow-orange fruit in 2' to 4' inflorescences.
- *Jubaea chilensis* is uncommon in the American nursery trade; although it can be grown in southern portions of our region with proper siting, it is not particularly vigorous along the Gulf Coast; trees are hardy in USDA cold hardiness zones 9 (8b) to 11; good air movement and excellent drainage in the root zone are critical to success; this species is better adapted to arid Mediterranean climates than mesic ones where the high humidity can be conducive to fungal pathogens and rots; loose well drained soils and a sunny exposure promote the healthiest growth; trees are drought tolerant once established, but are not particularly salt tolerant.
- The slow growth, erratic seed germination, and relative rarity of this species makes it a target for theft in unprotected locations; this is one of the few plants we have had stolen when planted at the Texas A&M University Horticulture Garden; the genus name honors an ancient king of Numidia (Algeria) named Juba; a syrup or wine is sometimes made from its sap, but the trees are killed in the process.

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