



Easy Gardens for South Florida,

28 Sample Pages
(Book has 320 pages and 801 photos)

Published by Pamela Crawford & Associates, www.pamela-crawford.com,
561-371-2719

Copyright ©2016, Pamela Crawford & Associates, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any other information storage and retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

2ND EDITION – COMPLETELY REVISED & UPDATED

Front Cover

PAMELA CRAWFORD'S
EASY GARDENS
FOR **SOUTH**
FLORIDA

235 NEW PLANTS & 701 NEW PHOTOS



FOR SOUTH FLORIDA. SEE MAP ON BACK COVER.



100 Blue Ribbon Plants

★ The easiest plants to grow
in south Florida!



130 Colorful Plants

★ Long bloomers that live for
over 15 years!



186 Butterfly Plants

★ Plants that attract lots of
beautiful butterflies!

**South Florida's
Best-Selling
Gardening Book**
**Completely Revised
& Updated**

Discover the Easiest
Plants to Grow in the
Yellow Zone



Back Cover



PAMELA CRAWFORD
& ASSOCIATES

\$39.95





Begonia, *Odorata*

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Herbaceous perennial.

Average Size: Easily maintained at sizes between 18 to 30 inches tall by 18 to 24 inches wide.

Growth Rate: Medium

Leaf: Medium-green, glossy and rounded. About 3 inches across.

Flower: White cluster. About 3 to 4 inches wide.

Lifespan: 15 plus years if it is trimmed and fertilized correctly (see opposite page, below the large photo).

Origin: Guadeloupe

Spacing: About 18 to 24 inches on center (measure from the center of each plant). Closer in containers.

Cautions: None known

Colors: White



Top: An *odorata* begonia plant.
Bottom: Close up of the flower

After testing over 200 types of perennial begonias, this begonia outperformed all of them! I've now had extensive experience with these fabulous begonias with no problems at all. They bloom for 6 to 9 months per year with very little care. Easily wins a blue ribbon.*



Odorata begonias bordered by *New Guinea impatiens*

The *odorata* begonia is a must for the winter landscape. It blooms quite heavily during the cooler months. The plant lasts for years, giving a dramatic show up close or from a distance. Many different kinds of begonias thrive in Florida, from small annuals to huge angelwings. This one is small to mid-sized, growing two to three feet in height.

When I first show this begonia to a new client, many say they aren't interested in it because they don't want to have to replace it all the time. The only begonia they have grown is the annual begonia. The *odorata* begonia is not an annual (a plant that lives for one season) but a very strong perennial (plant that lasts for years). Clients who have had experience with perennial begonias always say they have no luck with them. I understand that after losing 198 out of the 200 varieties I tested! The *odorata* begonia is the strongest perennial begonia I have ever found.

Bloom Time: *Odorata* begonias last for many years, flowering for six to nine months, predominantly during the cooler months. When the plant is not in flower, its leaves are attractive.

Buying Tips: These may or may not be available at your independent garden center. If you don't see them, ask if they can special order them for you. Lots of their suppliers in south Florida grow them. Don't expect them to look full and lush in the nursery pot. They usually need one full season in the ground to really fill out.

*Blue ribbon plants are defined on page 272. For blue ribbon performance, follow the planting and maintenance guidelines on 280 to 305.

32

Avg. Weeks of Color

Attracts Hummingbirds



Botanical Name: *Begonia odorata* 'Alba'

Family: Begoniaceae

Companions: This begonia works well in any style garden. Plant it with other shade plants that bloom in winter. For a delicate combination, plant the pink angelwing begonias as the tallest layer, brunfelsias in the middle, and border with the *odorata* begonias.



In one of my trial gardens, *odorata* begonias layered with red *salvia*, surround baskets mounted on border column kits from kinsmangarden.com. Side-planted baskets feature crotons as the centerpieces with *impatiens*, *coleus*, and some dragon wing begonias planted through the side holes and along the top edge.

Planting: Plant at any time of the year. See pages 282 to 283 for instructions.

Trimming: Trim this begonia once a year in summer when it has the least flowers and recovers fastest from a cutback. Trim back hard to about 12 inches tall, or to four or six nodes (bumps on the stem) above the ground. It takes about a month or two for the plant to recover. If the begonia gets leggy in between annual cutbacks, trim lightly as needed.

Fertilization: Fertilize in March, June, and October with the products and techniques described on pages 296 to 297.

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Light to medium shade

Water: Medium. Ideal watering is twice a week after the initial establishment period. Tolerates water up to 4 times per week. Requires more water when grown in containers. Do not overwater this plant, or it will get fungus. See pages 288 to 292 for more information.

Soil: Plant directly in your native soil. See pages 282 to 283 for more instructions.

Wind Tolerance: Low

Salt Tolerance: Medium

Zone: 9b to 11. Protect from freezes.

Propagation: Seeds or cuttings

Pest Problems: Brown spots on the leaves indicate fungus or bacteria. These routinely occur during the rainy season. Cut back on water, if possible. Do not spray unless they become severe.



Coleus layered in front of *odorata* begonias.



Bromeliads, *Alcantarea* spp.

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Accent

Average Size: 4 feet tall by equally as wide, but takes up to 10 years.

Growth Rate: Slow

Leaf: Long and thin; size varies by type.

Flower: Sends up a huge (6 feet tall) flower about once every 10 years.

Lifespan: Single plant lives about 10 years but forms many baby plants when it blooms.

Origin: Brazil

Spacing: 3 to 4 feet on center (measure from the center of each plant).

Cautions: Leaves have no spines, so gloves are not essential when trimming.

Colors: *Odorata* is silver. Imperial is grey-green on the tops of the leaves and either purple or red on the undersides of the leaves.



The easiest bromeliads in this book because they only have to be divided every 10 years or so. Just trim off the dead leaves once a year, and that's it! Easily rates a blue ribbon.



Odorata bromeliad surrounded by Neoregelias at Bullis Bromeliads in Homestead. It is a mature, 4 foot specimen that is silver. Odorata bromeliads are greener when they are young.

Use these bromeliads for the drama of their leaves instead of their spectacular flowers. The *odorata* and the imperial have beautiful leaves indeed. These are the two most popular *Alcantarea* bromeliads in south Florida. I use them most often when I need dramatic accents in higher light than most other bromeliads tolerate. These two *Alcantareas* are also larger than almost any of the *Aechmeas* and *Neoregelias*.

Both of these bromeliads are supposed to take full sun all day. I hesitated to plant any *odoratas* in full sun because I noticed brown tips on the ends of some I see that are planted in full sun. I don't know if the sun is the culprit, but I haven't yet had the nerve to try. I have had a lot of experience with the Imperial in the sun, but I hesitate to plant it in full sun in the hottest time of summer if it has been grown in the shade. However, most shade-grown bromeliads that will take full sun acclimate well if moved to a sunny location in winter.

Color Period: All year. The color stays the same throughout the year.

Buying Tips: Might be difficult to find. See 'Buying Tips,' page 279.

Left: I like pairing odorata bromeliads with bright pink, as shown here. The smaller, pink bromeliads are Neoregelias. This arrangement is larger than it looks in the photo. The large odorata is a full 3 feet across. The arrangement is about 7 feet tall overall.

52

Avg. Weeks of Color



Attracts Birds

Botanical Names: *Alcantarea odorata* and *Alcantarea imperialis*

Family: Bromelioideae

Companions: In a monochromatic color scheme, use *odorata* bromeliads with silver buttonwoods and bismark palms. Or for contrast, I like to form a background of red ti plants behind my *odoratas*. Piecrust crotons are also great backgrounds for these dramatic, silver bromeliads.

The imperial bromeliad in purple (I seldom use the red) needs to be surrounded by other colors, or it doesn't stand out. For a monochromatic scheme, try Persian shield behind and purple queen in front. For contrast, I use *Dracaena reflexa* 'Song of India' behind my imperials. Imperials also look great in containers, so they are displayed about the ground, and you can really see the color of underside of the leaves. Try them in black or silver containers. For more drama, plant *Dichondra* 'Silver Falls' to trail over the edge.



Imperial bromeliad surrounded with bromeliads with bright orange flowers

Planting: Plant at any time of the year. Bromeliads can be planted in the ground, like other landscape plants. See pages 282 to 283 for instructions.

Trimming: Trim off dead leaves that show on the bottom of the plant. The mother plant flowers about every 10 years, sending up a huge 6 foot bloom. Baby plants grow on the bloom. The mother plant dies a while after blooming. Plant the babies to take the mother's place.

Fertilization: Bromeliads do not require regular fertilization. If faster growth is desired, fertilize in March, June, and October with the products and techniques described on pages 296 to 297. Do not apply fertilizer to the center well of the plant.

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Medium shade to full sun. See the second paragraph under the photo on the opposite page for more information about light.

Water: Low. Likes water once a week after the establishment period but can take it 2 or 3 times a week. See pages 288 to 292 for more information.

Soil: Plant directly in your native soil. See pages 282 to 283 for more instructions.

Wind Tolerance: High

Salt Tolerance: High for the Imperial. Unknown for the *odorata*.

Zone: 9b to 11 for the Imperial. Protect from hard freezes. Zone 10 for the *odorata*.

Propagation: Offshoots that appear when the plant flowers.

Pest Problems: No serious pest or disease problems.



Imperial bromeliad raised in a planter so the beautiful, purple undersides of the leaves are visible.



Bromeliads, *Neoregelia* spp.

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Groundcover or accent.

Average Size: Sizes vary from 4 to 36 inches wide and 6 to 26 inches tall.

Growth Rate: Slow

Leaf: Long, thin leaf; some *Neoregelias* have striped leaves. Other plants feature leaves that are solid green for part of the year, and the centers of the plant change to bright colors shortly before they bloom.

Flower: Tiny purple flowers appear in the center in spring. The flowers are insignificant. Use this plant for leaf color.

Lifespan: Single plant lives about 2 years but sends up babies to replace itself. A clump of good landscape bromeliads lasts indefinitely.

Origin: South America

Spacing: Depends on mature size of the bromeliad you are planting.

Cautions: Leaves have spines. Wear long sleeves and gloves when handling. Also, mosquitoes can breed in the center well. I have heard that 'Mosquito Bits,' which are little pellets and are available online, can prevent breeding, but I have no personal experience with this product.

Colors: Many colors, mainly shades of green, red, pink, and rust.



One of the most colorful groups of bromeliads. An ideal landscape plant offering constant color (for some *Neoregelias*) in partial sun or shade. Requires trimming only once a year or so. Easily rates a blue ribbon* because it's so easy to grow.



Neoregelia bromeliads

Neoregelia bromeliads are some of the most beautiful accent plants for south Florida gardens. These bromeliads are almost flat and don't produce the beautiful, large flowers of other types of bromeliads. Their beauty is in their leaves. Many of them show beautiful leaf color all year long in exchange for very little care.

Color Period: Some *Neoregelias* show color all year, like the *Johannis*, shown lower right. Others are green until the plant begins to bloom, at which time the leaves turn beautiful colors.

Buying Tips: Bromeliads are now grown all over the world, mainly for the indoor plant market. Many of these bromeliads don't re-bloom in the south Florida landscape. Luckily, we have some south Florida growers who grow fabulous landscape bromeliads for us. You can't buy directly from them, but your independent garden center can. Many of these independents stock quite a few lovely *Neoregelias*. If you don't see what you want, see 'Buying Tips,' page 279.

Left: Neoregelia flowers are rather insignificant.

**Blue ribbon plants are defined on page 272. For blue ribbon performance, follow the planting and maintenance guidelines on 280 to 305.*

Companions: *Neoregelia* bromeliads are used either as accent plants or solid masses of groundcovers in partially sunny or shady areas. As accents, I usually use groups of three, with larger ones in the center and smaller ones on either side. The garden shown below shows the flat, pink-centered *Neoregelia* 'Tricolor Perfecta' planted around some of the taller and wider *Aechmea* 'Mends' bromeliads.

Some of the *Neoregelias* send out runners and spread like a solid mass. One of the most popular of these are the *Neoregelia* 'Fireball.'



Neoregelia 'Tricolor Perfecta' are the small, flat bromeliads on either side of the larger Aechmea 'Mends.' Anthuriums are planted in the background.

Planting: Plant at any time of the year. Bromeliads can be planted in the ground, like other landscape plants. See pages 282 to 283 for instructions. Bromeliads can also be mounted onto trees.

Trimming: The mother plant dies after flowering and producing pups (babies). Trim off the dead plant after it becomes brown. Leave the remaining pups (babies) to grow where they are or separate them to cover more ground. Do this about once each year or so. Learn how to plant and separate bromeliads with the video 'How to Plant Bromeliads into Large Pots' (3:05) at pamela-crawford.com, Container Garden Tips.

Fertilization: Bromeliads do not require regular fertilization. If faster growth is desired, fertilize in March, June, and October with the products and techniques described on pages 296 to 297. Do not apply fertilizer to the center well of the plant.

Right: Neoregelia 'Johannis' is one of my favorite Neoregelias because the green and white variegations show all year. The pink tones appear shortly before blooming. Many other Neoregelias are all green for part of the year and show color only for a few months when they are blooming.

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Medium to light shade for most *Neoregelias*. Some take more sun, but not many look their best with direct sun all day. It is best to stay on the safe side and use it in partial shade because the leaves burn with just a bit too much sun per day.

Water: After initial establishment period, low. Ideal is once every week or two. Bromeliads rot with too much water. Tolerates irrigation up to 2 or 3 times a week but needs much less. Untested without irrigation. See pages 288 to 292 for more information. Do not overwater your *Neoregelias*, or they will rot.

Soil: Plant directly in your native soil. See pages 282 to 283 for more instructions.

Wind Tolerance: Medium

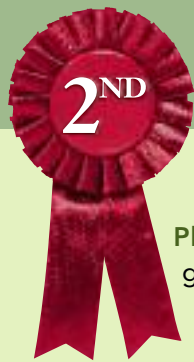
Salt Tolerance: Medium

Zone: 10a to 11

Propagation: Offshoots

Pest Problems: Root rot with overwatering. I seldom see any pests in the landscape but have heard of occasional scale infestations and spiral whitefly (page 295).





Croton, Mammey

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Shrub or groundcover.

Average Size: Easily maintained at sizes between 18 inches tall and 18 inches wide.

Growth Rate: Slow; takes many years to reach full height of 5 feet. Almost no growth in winter.

Leaf: Brightly colored in shades of red, yellow, and green; about 1 inch wide and 6 to 8 inches long with a twisted form.

Flower: Insignificant

Lifespan: 15 to 20 years

Origin: Malaysia. Mammey is a hybrid.

Spacing: About 18 inches on center (measure from the center of each plant). Closer in containers.

Cautions: Milky sap is an irritant and can stain clothes and irritate skin of pets and humans. Chewing the roots and bark can cause a mouth to burn, again in humans and pets.

Colors: Red, orange, and yellow leaves.



One of the most colorful shrubs available. The only croton I found that can be maintained as short as 18 inches. Constant color with very little care. Rates a red ribbon* because, for all its strengths, it is quite susceptible to a new scale insect.



Mammey crotons bordered by 'Pringles' podocarpus. These crotons are about three feet tall, but they can easily be maintained as low as 18 inches tall.

Most colorful plants that can be maintained as low as eighteen inches have a very short life-span or require a lot of care. The 'Mammey' croton is among the few that lives for 15 to 20 years with very little maintenance. These characteristics, coupled with the fact that it displays its strong colors all year, make it one of the most useful plants for the low maintenance garden. Because of its vibrant tones, this croton can set the color scheme for an entire garden.

I was shocked recently to find 'Mammey' crotons really looking bad. They had a new type of scale commonly called 'croton scale' (See 'Pests and Diseases', right green sidebar.)

Bloom Time: All year

Buying Tips: Relatively easy to find at garden centers

**Red ribbon plants are defined on page 273. For blue ribbon performance, follow the planting and maintenance guidelines on pages 280 to 305.*

52

Avg. Weeks of Color

Botanical Name: *Codiaeum variegatum* 'Mammey'

Family: Euphorbiaceae

Companions: Mammey crotons work particularly well with plants that have leaves or flowers that are red or yellow. An easy garden with dramatic color could feature red firespikes in the center, thryallis next, and 'Mammey' crotons as a border. Another easy combination features yellow mussaendas in the center, 'Mammey' crotons next, with a border of dwarf chenille.



Mammey crotons make a great container plant. I used lime green sedum to dress up the croton in the largest pot. 'Flame' snake plants are planted in the smaller pots.

Planting: Plant at any time of the year in native soil. See pages 282 to 283 for instructions.

Trimming: To encourage fullness, pinch off the tips of the branches about once a year. If the plant gets leggy, cut stalks way back (to two inches) in summer. Trim as needed to maintain desired size and to keep masses at equal heights. Mammey crotons are generally sold with three plants in each pot. These multiples allow you to stagger the cuts on the stems at different heights to keep the height of the plant and avoid legginess.

Fertilization: Fertilize in March, June, and October with the products and techniques described on pages 296 to 297.

Right: Crotons form a colorful swath with gold mound duranta in front and variegated false agaves in the center of the front row. Newly planted wart ferns and odorata begonias are planted in the foreground.

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Medium shade to full sun; takes shade but not deep shade; takes direct sun well.

Water: After initial establishment period, low water. Ideal is once a week. Tolerates irrigation up to 3 times a week. Survives without irrigation in average environmental conditions, but doesn't look as good as regularly watered crotons. More water in containers. See pages 288 to 292 for more information.

Soil: Plant directly in your native soil. See pages 282 to 283 for more instructions.

Wind Tolerance: High

Salt Tolerance: Medium

Zone: 10b to 11. Survives 25 degrees. Leaf damage shows at 40 degrees but recovers quickly.

Propagation: Seeds or cuttings

Pest Problems: Croton scale (page 295) is a serious problem. It looks like little bumps on the stem followed by black sticky stuff. It sucks the life out of the plant. Check with your local garden center for the least toxic cure. Also susceptible to spiral whitefly (page 295).





Agave, False Variegated

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Accent

Average Size: Easily maintained at sizes between 4 to 5 feet tall by equally as wide.

Growth Rate: Medium

Leaf: Long and pointed. White and green stripes. Sometimes develops spines on the sides.

Flower: Greenish-white huge, 20 foot tall bloom. Strongly scented. Attracts bees.

Lifespan: Relatively short, about 10 years.

Origin: Brazil

Spacing: About 4 to 5 feet on center (measure from the center of each plant).

Cautions: Sometimes develops spines on the sides of the leaves.

Colors: White and green stripes



False agave is planted in the largest planter, while 'Flame' snake plants grace the smaller planters. Both of these plants live on just rainwater and work really well in beautiful pottery. Plant snake plants in pots only because they are invasive.

One of the most useful accent plants. Dramatic impact with very little care. A close relative of the agave without the sharp tips. Easily wins a blue ribbon* because it is so easy to grow, surviving even in containers with only rainwater.



Mature false agave. As plants age, the leaves thicken up and the form becomes quite symmetrical and spiky. When they are young, the leaves flop a bit, as shown in the photos on the next page.

I use variegated false agaves more than any other accent plant because of their strong design impact with very little care. Their constant, light color contrasts well with either bright or dark companions. Their clean lines work equally as well in modern or tropical designs.

In containers, I use them with beautiful pottery that I don't want to cover up. Since they live on just rainwater, they are ideal for low-maintenance container plantings.

This agave doesn't develop the dangerous sharp tips like many of the real agaves. But don't be surprised to see some spines along the leaves as the plants age.

Season of Maximum Color: Every 10 years or so, this false agave sends up a huge, 20-foot flower that produces baby agaves. The mother plant dies after flowering. Plant the babies to replace the mother plant. You'll have enough left over to give to all of your friends.

Buying Tips: See page 279.

**Blue ribbon plants are defined on page 272. For blue ribbon performance, follow the planting and maintenance guidelines on pages 280 to 305.*



Lives on Rain Water * Avg. Weeks of Color

52

Botanical Name: *Furcraea foetida* 'Mediopicta'

Family: Agavaceae

Companions: In the landscape, use these agaves with bright or dark plants. Bright companions include red ti plants and 'Mammey' crotons. Dark companions include 'Piecrust' crotons and purple queen.



Above: Newly-planted false variegated agaves, underplanted with purple queen, form the focal point of this planting. 'Mammey' crotons and 'Gold Mound' duranta complete this colorful garden. Notice that these small agaves are much floppier than a mature one, shown in the large photo on the opposite page.

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Light shade to full sun

Water: Low after establishment. Lives on just rainwater, but will tolerate water up to 3 times per week. See pages 288 to 292 for more information.

Soil: Plant directly in your native soil. See pages 282 to 283 for more instructions.

Wind Tolerance: High

Salt Tolerance: Unknown, but most plants in this family are highly tolerant of salt.

Zone: Tolerates temperatures down to 30 degrees.

Propagation: Offshoots

Pest and Disease Problems: Snails occasionally, as well as leaf spots from overwatering.



Above: Newly-planted false agaves. To see a brief (1:36 minutes) video about this landscape, go to pamelacrawford.com, 'Short Makeover Videos,' 'Tropical Landscape Makeover in Delray Beach, FL.'

Brunfelsia or Yesterday, Today, & Tomorrow

22

Avg. Weeks of Color Attracts Butterflies Attracts Hummingbirds



Botanical Name: *Brunfelsia grandiflora*
Family: Solanaceae

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Shrub

Average Size: Easily maintained at sizes between 4 feet tall by 3 feet wide and 9 feet tall by 7 feet wide.

Growth Rate: Medium

Leaf: Dark, glossy green, and pointed. About 4 inches long by 2 inches wide.

Flower: Beautiful clusters of three colors, all different shades of purple. Each flower measures about 1 inch across. The flower starts out dark and gets lighter each day.

Lifespan: 10 to 20 years

Origin: South America

Spacing: About 3 to 4 feet on center (measure from the center of each plant).

Cautions: Toxic to cats, dogs, and horses. Frequently goes through shock after planting, losing many leaves (See “Planting” on opposite page). Also, defoliates much more in windy locations than most plants. Use in a very calm location.

Colors: Purple and white



One of our most beautiful winter bloomers. A must for winter gardens in south Florida. Misses a ribbon because the shrub is trickier to establish than most of the other plants in this book and can defoliate easily in wind.



Brunfelsia in a tropical garden. Yellow musseanda and ‘Stoplight’ crotons are planted on either side of the bench. Snake plants are planted in the pots. Areca palms surround the area.

Brunfelsia is an excellent shrub for color in winter, one of the best. It is beautiful and quite a conversation piece, with its three colors of flowers. But it has quirks. It goes through shock frequently after planting, which is lessened by a lot of water. Soaker hoses are ideal. The second year in the ground, it is much more comfortable and less thirsty. And, it will not bloom if trimmed at the wrong time of year (see “Trimming”, opposite). It needs a calm spot, defoliating quickly in too much wind. So, plant it in a sheltered location at the beginning of the rainy season, and trim in summer. You will be very happy with this plant under those conditions.

Season of Maximum Color: Brunfelsias flower in winter, quite dependably from late November until spring. The plant lasts for many years, looking good while not blooming.

Buying Tips: This plant could be hard to find. It usually doesn’t look good in a nursery pot, so most garden centers would shy away from it. Ask the staff if they can order one for you, and expect it to be unimpressive until it is well-established in the landscape. See page 279 for more buying tips.

Companions: Plant brunfelsia with other plants that bloom in winter. It looks good with pink and yellow. A great combination for shade includes pink angelwing begonias for the tallest layer, brunfelsias in the middle, and a border of golden shrimp plants. The photo, lower right, shows this grouping with an added border of bright pink impatiens.



Brunfelsia flowers are three colors. The first day the flower is purple. The next day, it lightens to lilac. The third day, it is almost white. These three colors on subsequent days have led to the common name: yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Planting: Plant brunfelsias at any time. Since they need a lot of water after planting, it is easier to get them established in summer, when there is a lot of rain. If planted in fall, soaker hoses are ideal to avoid transplant shock. Brunfelsias frequently lose their bottom leaves after planting, but this occurs much less with a lot of water. Be sure to leave the root ball slightly out of the ground, about 1/4 inch.

Trimming: Trim hard by hand once or twice a year during the summer months when it is not blooming. If trimmed after August, this plant will not bloom the following winter. See pages 300 to 302 for more instructions about trimming by hand.

Fertilization: Brunfelsias are heavy feeders. Immediately after planting, fertilize with a well-balanced, slow-release mix that includes minor elements. Repeat in March, June, and October of each year. If the summer is unusually hot and rainy, inspect the leaf color of the plant in August. If it appears washed out, add an additional fertilization at that time. See pages 296 to 297 for more detailed instructions.

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Medium shade to full sun. Ideal light is light shade.

Water: Very high water during the establishment period. Soaker hoses for a few hours a day are ideal for the first month or two. Medium water after plant is well-rooted in the ground. Ideal watering is twice a week after the initial establishment period. Tolerates water up to 4 times per week. See pages 288 to 292 for more information.

Soil: Plant directly in your native soil. See pages 282 to 283 for more instructions.

Wind Tolerance: Low. Defoliates in wind.

Salt Tolerance: Low

Zone: 10a to 11. Other cold-tolerant brunfelsias grow in zone 9.

Propagation: Seeds or cuttings

Pest and Disease Problems: Snails and scale.



See ‘Companions,’ (upper left, this page) for a description of these plants.



Crotons, Pink Tones

52

Avg. Weeks of Color

Botanical Name: *Codiaeum variegatum*

Family: Euphorbiaceae

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Shrub

Average Size: Easily maintained at sizes between 3 feet tall by 2 feet wide and 6 feet tall by 5 feet wide.

Growth Rate: Medium, particularly in the winter. Crotons grow faster in summer.

Leaf: Varies by type

Flower: Insignificant

Lifespan: 15 to 30 years

Origin: Malaysia

Spacing: From 2 to 3 feet on center (measure from the center of each plant), depending on mature size of the croton you are planting.

Cautions: Milky sap irritates skin and stains clothes. (I have handled crotons often, and they never stained my clothes, but be careful.)

Colors: Pink, yellow, peach, burgundy.



Piecrust croton with black and lime sweet potato vine.

Constant color with easy care in sun, shade, salt, or wind. Pink crotons are softer in tone than the reds or yellows. Only rates a red ribbon* because of its sensitivity to croton scale.



'Icetone' croton in summer. Also called apple blossom croton.

Most people think of crotons as orange and yellow, but beautiful crotons also come in softer tones. Crotons are one of the easiest plants for constant color with very little care. They grow in sun or shade and are really easy to grow. I like to mix the 'Icetone' and 'Magnificent' crotons with plants that have pink and yellow flowers, like shrub allamanda and Panama rose. Try the 'Piecrust' crotons with flowers with white leaves as described, right. All three of these crotons look great with lime green, like 'Gold Mound' duranta and sweet potato vine.

They are susceptible to attack by croton scale, however, which can disfigure or kill them fairly quickly. Look for distorted leaves, bumps on the stem, leaf loss, white spots on the back of the leaves, or ants. It's easy to control, however, by following the instructions described in this short video about this pest. go to www.youtube.com, 'Croton Scale Attacking More than 70 Plants' by Doug Caldwell, UF/IFAS Collier Co. Extension.

Color Period: Colorful all year. Many varieties remain the same color all year while others change color based on temperature.

Buying Tips: If you don't see these at your local independent garden center, ask if they can order them in for you. See page 279 for more tips.

**Red ribbon plants are defined on page 273. For red ribbon performance, follow the planting and maintenance guidelines on 280 to 305.*



'Icetone' croton (*Codiaeum variegatum* 'Mrs. Icetone') features unusual pink and yellow colorations on crotons that are normally more orange. Easily maintained at sizes between three feet tall by two feet wide and six feet tall by five feet wide. In spring and summer, the colors are green, yellow, dark grey, and red (as shown, opposite). In winter, the plant is darker (as shown, right).



'Piecrust' croton (*Codiaeum variegatum* 'Piecrust') offers unique, predominately dark color and a texture that resembles a piecrust. The colors change from lighter in summer to darker in winter. These crotons are particularly useful when dark-light contrast is needed. They show well combined with plants with white leaves, like those found on *Dracaena reflexa* 'Song of India' and the variegated false agave. They are easily maintained at sizes between three feet tall by two feet wide and six feet tall by five feet wide.



'Magnificent' croton (*Codiaeum variegatum* 'Magnificent') is the palest of the three, with soft yellow and pink tones on its leaves. Its leaves are larger than the other two, giving it a more tropical look. It is easily maintained at sizes between three feet tall by two feet wide and six feet tall by five feet wide.

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Light shade to full sun

Water: After initial establishment period, low water. Ideal is once a week. Tolerates irrigation up to 4 times a week. Survives without irrigation most of the time, but suffers from severe wilt when rains are infrequent.

Soil: Plant directly in your native soil. See pages 282 to 283 for more instructions.

Wind Tolerance: High

Salt Tolerance: Medium-high

Zone: 10a to 11

Propagation: Cuttings, which root faster from May to August.

Pest and Disease Problems: Croton scale is a serious pest. See paragraph under largest photo on the opposite page.

Trimming: Trim as needed to maintain desired size. Crotons of the same type planted in a mass grow at different rates. Keep them trimmed to the same height. If the plants look leggy, trim some of the leggy branches to the ground. If you do this in June or July, as many as three branches will sprout from each cut, filling in the bare base.

Fertilization: Fertilize in March, June, and October with the products and techniques described on pages 296 to 297. Crotons' nutritional needs are low, but they do benefit and grow faster with these fertilizations.



Dombeya ‘Seminole’

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Shrub

Average Size: Easily maintained at sizes between 6 feet tall by 6 feet wide and 8 feet tall by 8 feet wide.

Growth Rate: Fast

Leaf: Medium green. About 6 inches long by 6 inches wide.

Flower: Medium pink, round, and shaped like a hydrangea. About 4 to 5 inches across.

Lifespan: 15 to 20 years

Origin: Dombeyas are native to South Africa or Mascarene Islands. The ‘Seminole’ was hybridized by Paul Soderholm, USDA, in Miami.

Spacing: About 6 to 10 feet on center (measure from the center of each plant).

Cautions: Attracts bees

Colors: Pink



This bloom is from the Dombeya wallichii, which is a tree Dombeya. It grows to 15 feet tall by 10 feet wide. The flowers are gorgeous, but they are upside down and under the leaves of the tree. So they don't show as much as the blooms on the Dombeya ‘Seminole,’ whose blooms are upright and borne on top of the leaves for easy viewing.

One of our most beautiful winter bloomers. Looks like the northern hydrangea. Easily wins a blue ribbon* because it is easy to grow.



Dombeya ‘Seminole’ in full bloom. The pink flowers are carried on top of the shrub and show well up close or from a distance.

Dombeya ‘Seminole’ is a fabulous plant, a must for winter gardens in south Florida. It produces six months of traffic-stopping color with very little care. The flowers resemble northern hydrangeas but are not related. Many different types of dombeyas exist. Some are large trees, with attractive, drooping flowers that need to be viewed from below (see photo and caption, left). But, the ‘Seminole’ holds its flowers on top of the leaves, so they are easily viewed from any angle. The plant is amazingly tough, taking adverse conditions with no problems. The only issue with the plant is that it is somewhat difficult to propagate, so not many nurseries stock it. If you see one, buy it because you might not see it again. But, be sure that it is the ‘Seminole’ type and not the tree type (*Dombeya wallichii*), which is much easier to propagate but much different in its size and performance (see photo and caption, left).

Season of Maximum Color: *Dombeya* ‘Seminole’ usually bloom twice a year. The first period starts in late fall and continues through late January. The plant takes a break for about a month and starts blooming again in March, continuing until late May. The plant itself looks good, even when not blooming.

Buying Tips: Look for this one in the winter or spring when it is blooming. It is most likely to be in the independent garden centers during those seasons. If you can't find one, ask the staff if they can order one for you. Don't be concerned if it is small because *Dombeyas* are fast growers. But be sure it is multitrunked, like a nicely-formed shrub. If it has only a single trunk, it will not grow into an acceptable shrub. See page 279 for more tips.

**Blue ribbon plants are defined on page 272. For blue ribbon performance, follow the planting and maintenance guidelines on pages 280 to 305.*

20



Avg. Weeks of Color Attracts Butterflies Attracts Hummingbirds

Companions: Use *Dombeya* ‘Seminole’ with other plants that bloom in winter. Brunfelsias, golden shrimp plants, and both pink and purple firespikes make fabulous flowering companions. Plants with pink leaf color, like ‘Icetone’ and ‘Magnificent’ crotons, are also lovely companions.



Recently planted, small, Dombeya ‘Seminole’ in full bloom. The pink flowers are carried on top of the shrub and show well up close or from a distance. Blue annual salvia and yellow giant shrimp plants complete the planting.

Planting: Plant at any time of the year. See pages 282 to 283 for detailed instructions.

Trimming: Trim back hard in June. The goal is to round out the shape of the plant, not square it off. This annual trimming is normally enough for superior performance the next winter. Do not trim back after August, or you might not have blooms the following winter. See pages 300 to 302 for more instructions about trimming by hand.

Fertilization: Fertilize in March, June, and October with the products and techniques described on pages 296 to 297.

Botanical Name: *Dombeya* ‘Seminole’

Family: Malvaceae

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Light shade to full sun

Water: Medium. Ideal watering is twice a week after the initial establishment period. Tolerates water up to 5 times per week. See pages 288 to 292 for more information.

Soil: Plant directly in your native soil. See pages 282 to 283 for more instructions.

Wind Tolerance: Medium

Salt Tolerance: Medium

Zone: 9b to 11. Cold damage occurs between 25 and 29 degrees.

Propagation: Cuttings or air layers.

Pest and Disease Problems: None known.

Note: Blooms increase if dead flowers are removed in between the two winter bloom periods. Also, since Dombeyas need a lot of room to spread, the planting area around them appears quite empty right after planting. Fill in with annuals for an instant look, and do not replace them the following season.



Dombeya ‘Seminole’ flower



Petrea, Queen's Wreath

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Vine

Average Size: Variable; a medium-sized vine.

Growth Rate: Medium

Leaf: Medium green; about 4 inches long. Feels rough, like light sandpaper.

Flower: Spectacular hanging clusters about 8 to 10 inches long.

Lifespan At least 10 years

Origin: Caribbean region, Central and South America.

Spacing: About 4 to 6 feet on center (measure from the center of each plant).

Cautions: None known

Colors: Purple or white



Petrea is ideal for growing on the top of sturdy arbors.

Petrea is one of the most beautiful flowers in south Florida. It resembles the northern wisteria plant. This spectacular vine doesn't bloom as long as many other plants in this book, but its beauty makes up for a shorter bloom period. Rates a blue ribbon* because it's easy to grow.



Petrea is a little-used plant that is spectacular, but it is slow to begin blooming. Once I recommended it for climbing a trellis on either side of a client's garage. Three years after planting, she told me she almost wrecked her car after noticing the first blooms. Nurseries are now stocking older plants, so unless you are very patient, buy a big one.

Petrea is a large vine that is ideal for large trellises and arbors. Its bottom branches become quite thick and woody. The blooms appear on top.

Season of Maximum Color: In most years, peaks for about six weeks in February and March, with sporadic blooms in the spring and fall.

Buying Tips: Difficult to find. Ask your independent garden center to order one for you. See pages 279 for more information about finding the plants in this book.

**Blue ribbon plants are defined on page 272. For blue ribbon performance, follow the planting and maintenance guidelines on pages 280 to 305.*

20

Avg. Weeks of Color



Attracts Butterflies



Attracts Hummingbirds

Companions: Petrea blends well with all landscape styles. Combine it with pink for a soft look. Pink angelwing begonias are a lovely pink companion when planted underneath an arbor covered with petrea.



Planting: Plant at any time of the year. See pages 282 to 283 for instructions.

Trimming: Trim when it is not blooming to keep it within bounds. See pages 300 to 302 for more instructions about trimming by hand.

Fertilization: Fertilize in March, June, and October with the products and techniques described on pages 296 to 297.

Botanical Name: *Petrea volubilis*

Family: Verbenaceae

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Light shade to full sun

Water: Medium after establishment. Likes water twice a week after the establishment period, and I haven't tested it with less water than that. Some sources say it needs little supplemental irrigation. Survives irrigation up to 4 or 5 times per week. See pages 276 to 280 for more information.

Soil: Plant directly in your native soil. See pages 282 to 283 for more information.

Wind Tolerance: Unknown

Salt Tolerance: Medium

Zone: 10a to 12

Propagation: Air layers, suckers

Pest Problems: No serious pests



Frangipani ‘Pudica’ or Bridal Bouquet

26



Avg. Weeks of Color Attracts Butterflies Attracts Hummingbirds

Botanical Name: *Plumeria pudica*
Family: Apocynaceae

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Small tree or large shrub.

Average Size: Easily maintained at sizes between 6 feet tall by 5 feet wide and 12 feet tall by 8 feet wide.

Growth Rate: Medium

Leaf: Shaped like a fiddle; up to 12 inches long.

Flower: Up to 3-inch blooms that form clusters.

Lifespan: 20 years plus

Origin: Venezuela, Columbia and Panama.

Spacing: About 8 to 12 feet on center (measure from the center of each plant).

Cautions: Touching or eating can cause skin irritation or mild stomach pain.

Colors: White

Spectacular flowers for a full six months on an attractive, almost evergreen tree. Doesn't rate a ribbon because of some pest and disease problems, which are easy to control.



The bridal bouquet is a fabulous plant if you can put up with the bugs and the possibility it will be bare in winter. Frangipani caterpillars may feast on its leaves. If you remove the caterpillars when you see the first damage, they might not return that season. It loses its leaves during our cool months in unusually cold winters or in very dry situations. A rust fungus also increases leaf loss. Most people don't treat the rust because if the leaves are allowed to fall, the plant will be bare for a short time before new leaves appear. Most other frangipanis always lose their leaves in winter, while the bridal bouquet usually keeps them.

The bridal bouquet is so beautiful in bloom (and stays in bloom for a full six months) that many gardeners put up with the pests and enjoy the beautiful white flowers.

The bridal bouquet is not fragrant, like so many other frangipanis.

Season of Maximum Color: April to December

Buying Tips: Fairly easy to find when it is in full bloom. Be sure to buy a tree with multiple trunks. Bridal bouquets trimmed into a single trunked specimen fall over frequently. See page 279 for information about finding the plants in this book.

Some of this data was taken from 'Plumeria Pudica,' by Stephen H. Brown, University of Florida IFAS Extension.

Companions: Plant the bridal bouquet with other plants whose blooms peak in our warm season. Plumbago and thryallis are great shrub companions while dwarf poincianas work well as small tree companions.



Planting: Plant at any time of the year. See pages 282 to 283 for detailed instructions.

Trimming: Seldom needs pruning except to maintain it at a desired size.

Fertilization: Fertilize in March, June, and October with the products and techniques described on pages 296 to 297.

Right: Bridal bouquets are good choices for containers (photographed at Giverny Gardens in Jupiter).

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Light shade to full sun

Water: Low after establishment. Likes water twice a week after the establishment period. See pages 288 to 292 for more information.

Soil: Plant directly in your native soil. See pages 282 to 283 for more information.

Wind Tolerance: Unknown

Salt Tolerance: High

Zone: 10a to 11

Propagation: Seeds or cuttings

Pest Problems: Frangipani caterpillars, rust and mealybugs. Pick the caterpillars off when they are first discovered and they often disappear. Also, spiraling whitefly (page 295).





Japanese Fern Tree

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Tree

Average Size: Mature size is 30 feet tall by 20 feet wide. Can be maintained smaller by trimming. I have never tried to maintain it smaller than about 20 feet tall by 15 feet wide. Since I have seen it growing as a hedge, it stands to reason that it is a very controllable plant.

Growth Rate: Medium

Leaf: Medium green; about 2 inches long arranged on a stem like a fern.

Flower: Inconspicuous

Lifespan: At least 30 years

Origin: India and Sri Lanka

Spacing: About 10 to 20 feet on center (measure from the center of each plant).

Cautions: None known

Colors: Green



Trimmed as a hedge

A beautiful tree with an interesting texture; useful because of its small size and very attractive appearance. Easily wins a blue ribbon* because it's so easy to grow.



The Japanese fern tree is unusual in south Florida. Very little has been written about it anywhere. I have been watching it for 25 years and have found no problems. The tree is very attractive and easy to grow and maintain. It is a great alternative for the larger oaks and mahoganies that are commonly planted in areas that are much too small for them.

Although this tree is most often grown as a tree, I have seen it grown as a hedge as well (see photo, left).

The only disadvantage to this beautiful tree is the frequent difficulty of locating a large specimen. But if you have the patience, small ones are usually available. The beauty of the tree makes waiting for it to grow well worth it.

Season of Maximum Color: No flowers; stays green all year.

Buying Tips: May be hard to find. See page 279 for more information about finding the plants in this book.

**Blue ribbon plants are defined on page 272. For blue ribbon performance, follow the planting and maintenance guidelines on pages 280 to 305.*

Botanical Name: *Filicium decipiens*

Family: Sapindaceae

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Light shade to full sun

Water: After initial establishment period, medium water. Twice a week is ideal. Tolerates irrigation at least up to 3 times a week. Untested without irrigation. See pages 288 to 292 for more information.

Soil: Plant directly in your native soil. See pages 282 to 283 for more instructions.

Wind Tolerance: Unknown

Salt Tolerance: Unknown

Zone: 10a to 11

Propagation: Easy to propagate from seeds. I have never tried cuttings.

Pest Problems: None known

Companions: The Japanese fern tree fits into many different landscape styles. For a manicured look, plant it with 'Pringles' podocarpus and Green Island ficus. For a tropical look, combine the fern tree with travelers palms and foxtail palms.



Japanese fern trees, with trinettes below, planted along a roadside.

Planting: Plant at any time of the year. See pages 282 to 283 for detailed instructions.

Trimming: If the tree appears shrub-like when young, cut the bottom branches off the trunk. Trim the outer leaves of the canopy to maintain the desired size. This tree naturally forms a symmetrical, almost perfect shape so it doesn't need much trimming unless you want to reduce its size or maintain it like a hedge.

Fertilization: Fertilize in March, June, and October with the products and techniques described on pages 296 to 297.





Live Oak

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Tree

Average Size: 40 to 50 feet tall by 50 to 60 feet wide.

Growth Rate: Medium; grows faster with supplemental water and fertilizer.

Leaf: Dark olive green with a gray cast; about 2 inches long by 1/2 inch wide. Leaves on the new growth have smooth sides. Older leaves show some serrations along the sides. Laurel oak leaves have smooth sides on all leaves.

Flower: Insignificant

Lifespan: 100 years

Origin: Southeastern U.S., Central America, Cuba, and Mexico.

Spacing: About 30 to 40 feet on center (measure from the center of each plant).

Cautions: None known

Colors: Green



One of the best trees in south Florida for attracting wildlife. Easy and beautiful. Narrowly misses a blue ribbon because of its susceptibility to spiraling whitefly (page 295). Easily wins a red ribbon because it is so easy to grow.



Live oaks are one of the best trees for roadside plantings.

Live oaks are the most beautiful shade trees in south Florida. Their beauty lies in the spreading, graceful structure of the branches and the rough bark. Many other plants, like orchids, resurrection fern, and Spanish moss, attach themselves to the trunk, anchored by this rough bark. Mature live oaks sometimes look like entire ecosystems, with gardens of natural plants supported by their branches.

Many of our south Florida shade trees produce shade too dense for plants to survive underneath them, and the area underneath becomes sand. Not so for live oaks. Their dappled shade is ideal for many of south Florida's lushest foliage. The tree is partially deciduous, not as full in winter as summer. And, it is not particularly attractive when young. But a little patience produces a great reward - a mature live oak.

Season of Maximum Color: No seasonal variation, except the tree is partially deciduous (fewer leaves in the winter).

Buying Tips: See page 279 for more information about finding the plants in this book.



Attracts Birds



Lives on Rain Water *



Florida Native



Attracts Hummingbirds

Botanical Name: *Quercus virginiana*

Family: Fagaceae

Companions: For a woodland garden, plant masses of wart ferns under an oak. Add color accents, like *Odorata* begonias. The dappled shade under a live oak is ideal for this plant material. Native shrubs, like wild coffee, are also great companions for planting under oaks.



Live Oak Hammock Trail, Long Key Natural & Nature Center, Davie, Florida.

Planting: Plant at any time of the year. See pages 282 to 283 for detailed instructions.

Trimming: Live oaks require little trimming. They form naturally into good specimens without a lot of pruning. Remove crossed branches and dead wood every few years.

Fertilization: Live oaks do not require fertilizer in average Florida soils. But, if faster growth is desired, fertilize in March, June, and October with the products and techniques described on pages 296 to 297. Supplemental water also increases the growth rate of these trees.

Raking: Live oaks drop leaves all year. Raking can be a nuisance if grass is planted underneath or the leaves fall on pavement. Oak leaves are one of the best mulches available for the garden.



**Lives on rainwater alone in all but the most extreme situations after the initial establishment period (pages 289 - 291).*

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Light shade to full sun

Water: Low, but tolerates irrigation up to 3 times per week. Lives without irrigation in many parts of south Florida after its initial establishment period. Oaks often defoliate after being transplanted, but leaves reappear quickly. See pages 288 to 292 for more information.

Soil: Plant directly in your native soil. See pages 282 to 283 for more instructions.

Wind Tolerance: High

Salt Tolerance: High

Zone: 7b to 11. Survives temperatures well below freezing.

Propagation: Seeds

Pest Problems: Spiraling whitefly (page 295), galls, root rot.

Note: According to Roger Hammer in his book "Attracting Hummingbirds and Butterflies in Tropical Florida," both butterflies and hummingbirds are attracted to live oaks. Hummingbirds like the pollen of the live oak's flowers. Several butterflies lay their eggs on live oak leaves so their caterpillars can feed on the leaves.





Bismark Palm

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Palm

Average Size: 30 feet tall by 16 to 20 feet wide.

Growth Rate: Slow; medium with fertilization. Growth rate increases after trunk development.

Leaf: Green to gray-blue palmate fronds (shaped like a fan or palm of the hand) are up to 9 feet long.

Flower: Insignificant

Lifespan: More than 50 years

Origin: Madagascar

Spacing: 20 to 25 feet on center (measure from the center of each plant).

Cautions: Very difficult to transplant large specimens unless they have been properly root-pruned. Also, be sure to give the Bismarck at least 16 to 20 feet of space to spread. Pollen is allergenic to some people.



A young Bismarck palm. The head of the palm develops first to its full 16 to 20 foot width before the trunk starts to show. Many Bismarcks are planted when they are small, and it is hard to imagine the 16 to 20 feet they will need when mature. Be sure to give this large palm enough space to grow.

One of our finest palm specimen for making a strong statement in the landscape. Narrowly misses a blue ribbon because of some susceptibility to pests and diseases. Easily merits a red ribbon* because it is so easy to grow.



The Bismarck palm is not only distinctive and stately, but also very easy to grow. Given its benefits and stately appearance, one would expect Bismarcks to be more widely used. However, they require large spaces to accommodate their 20 foot spread.

Bismarcks are easy and relatively inexpensive to plant from a pot, but they don't develop much size in a pot. Huge Bismarcks are commonly transplanted (after root pruning) from tree farms, but they are quite expensive. Therefore, if you are on a budget, buy a small Bismarck, and be patient as it grows. The wait is worth the effort.

Buying Tips: Easy to find. See page 279 for more information about finding sources for the plants in this book.

**Red ribbon plants are defined on page 273. For red ribbon performance, follow the planting and maintenance guidelines on pages 280 to 305.*



Attracts Birds

Companions: The silver color of the Bismarck shows best when contrasted with bright colors, like purple or hot pink. Ti 'Red Sisters' or bright red crotons are spectacular when massed under Bismarcks (see photo, lower right). Purple queen is a great groundcover for contrast with the silver foliage. Bismarcks also look beautiful with other silver plants, like silver agaves, *Odorata* bromeliads, and silver buttonwoods.



Bismarcks and silver agaves

Planting: Plant at any time of the year. See pages 282 to 283 for detailed instructions.

Trimming: Remove leaves only when they are completely dead because live leaves send nutrients into the palm.

Fertilization: Although many experts recommend using a good-quality palm fertilizer for all palms, I recommend the product and methods described on pages 296 to 297 on Bismark palms because it works beautifully and doesn't burn nearby, more-delicate plants. Take care when applying palm fertilizer because most are quite strong and capable of burning shrubs and groundcovers planted underneath the palm.

Botanical Name: *Bismarckia nobilis*

Family: Arecaceae

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Light shade to full sun. The fronds are grayer with more light, fading to green with too much shade. The palm is also less compact in shade.

Water: After initial establishment, low water. Ideal is once a week. Tolerates irrigation at least up to 3 times a week. Untested without irrigation. See pages 288 to 292 for more information.

Soil: Plant directly in your native soil. See pages 282 to 283 for more instructions.

Wind Tolerance: Medium

Salt Tolerance: Medium

Zone: 9b to 11

Propagation: Seeds

Pest & Disease Problems: Palmetto weevil, ganoderma (page 295).



Young Bismarck planted with Ti 'Red Sisters' and red crotons.



Sylvester Palm

CHARACTERISTICS

Plant Type: Palm

Average Size: 40 feet tall by 15 feet wide.

Growth Rate: Slow, about 1 to 3 feet per year.

Leaf: Leaflets are between 12 and 18 inches long. Fronds can grow up to 10 feet long.

Flower: Insignificant

Lifespan: More than 50 years

Origin: India and Pakistan

Spacing: About 20 to 30 feet on center (measure from the center of each plant).

Cautions: Sharp spines on the stem. Also, trees are either male or female. Male trees produce pollen that is an allergen.



Sharp spines on fronds

Great palm for making a strong design statement. Narrowly misses a blue ribbon because of some susceptibility to pests and diseases. Easily merits a red ribbon* because it is so easy to grow.



Sylvester palms are excellent choices when a strong design statement is desired. Their large size draws attention to the spot, making them ideal for entries to neighborhoods and front yards alike. They are not as large as their cousins, *Phoenix dactylifera* and *Phoenix canariensis*, but are often replacing them because of pest and disease problems.

Sylvester palms produce edible dates. Their trunk features a unique, diamond pattern caused by the scars where leaves have been cut off.

Buying Tips: Easy to find. See page 279 for more information.

**Red ribbon plants are defined on page 273. For red ribbon performance, follow the planting and maintenance guidelines on pages 280 to 305.*



Lives on Rain Water *



Attracts Birds

Botanical Name: *Phoenix sylvestris*

Family: Arecaceae

Companions: Sylvester palms work well lining a street when they are planted about 30 feet apart. They also mix well with smaller palms with different textures, especially the spindle palm. And their close cousin, the pygmy date palm, is a natural partner.



Planting: Plant at any time of the year. See page 282 to 283 for detailed instructions.

Trimming: Trim off the dead fronds to prevent ‘skirting,’ or dead fronds forming the appearance of a skirt. Use extreme caution because of sharp, dangerous spines.

Fertilization: Fertilize in March, June, and October with a good-quality palm fertilizer. Take care when applying palm fertilizer because most are quite strong and capable of burning shrubs and groundcovers planted underneath the palm.

**Lives on rainwater alone in all but the most extreme situations after the initial establishment period (pages 288 to 292).*

GROWING CONDITIONS

Light: Full sun

Water: Low after establishment. Quite tolerant of very low water environments, but grows better with regular watering. Likes water twice a week after the establishment period. See pages 288 to 292 for more information.

Soil: Plant directly in your native soil. See pages 282 to 283 for more instructions.

Wind Tolerance: High

Salt Tolerance: Medium

Zone: 8b to 11

Propagation: Seeds or cuttings

Pest & Disease Problems: Texas Phoenix palm decline, lethal yellowing (page 295), ganoderma (page 295).



Seeds become edible dates.