

Areca Palm

Info Sheet *Dypsis lutescens*

Areca Palm is a confusing name to serious students of the palm family since *Areca catechu* is the scientific name for the famous Betel Nut Palm of Southern Asia. Nevertheless, our "Areca Palm" has been a favorite for landscaping in Florida and also for container use for many years. It is also known as Yellow Butterfly Palm and by its former scientific name; *Chrysalidocarpus lutescens*. This palm is a fast grower and is adaptable to either full sun or light shade. They produce many suckers or additional trunks throughout their life and so they can be grown as a very full bushy plant which can be used as a hedge or screen, or they can be thinned and grown as a multi-trunked specimen which can grow to 20 feet tall.

Arecas are extremely versatile and are often used as container plants or even as inexpensive house plants although their high light requirements make them poorly suited for this purpose.

Areca Palms are sensitive to cold and can be damaged by frosts and light freezes or even killed to the ground by a severe freeze. Given time, well established Arecas will usually be able to recover from even the most severe cold damage. In recent years it has become a common practice for Arecas to be planted very thickly in their containers, with as many as 20 or 30 individual seedlings in a single pot these can be divided rather easily if you buy a small pot of Arecas. If you intend to plant Arecas in a sunny spot it is important to buy plants that have been grown in sun.

PLANTING

Palms are adaptable to many soils; but best growth can be expected when palms are set in a well drained, improved soil, in sun or light shade. Potted specimens should be set in the ground at soil level and mulch should be applied over the root zone to keep the soil moist. Palms that are used in open lawn areas should have a three to four foot mulched ring left around the base to protect the trunks from damage by lawn equipment. Newly planted palms should be watered every third day for about two weeks, thereafter

water weekly until the palm is well established. Mix **Espoma Bio-tone Starter** into the soil when planting to stimulate healthy root growth.

FERTILIZING

Use **Leonard's 11-4-11** every other month at a rate of 1 to 3 cups. Apply evenly on the surface. It is better to use small amounts rather frequently. Never apply epsom salts or magnesium sulfate to palms as these products may cause potassium deficiency which is a common problem for Arecas.

PLANT PROBLEMS

Potassium Deficiency. A nutrient deficiency which causes yellow spotting and premature death of the lower or older leaves. The solution for this problem is frequent medium to light applications of a good palm fertilizer in which the percentage of Potassium is at least equal to the percentage of nitrogen.

Saddleback Caterpillars. Brightly colored caterpillars with a brown saddle pattern on their backs which chew the edges of the leaflets. Saddlebacks usually do not do a great deal of damage to palms, but they do inflict painful stings on humans. Spray the entire palm with **Thuricide** to control Saddlebacks.

Rockledge Gardens



2153 S. U.S. #1 • Rockledge, FL 32955

Open Mon-Sat 9 am-6 pm • Sun (Feb-May) 11 am-4 pm

www.rockledgegardens.com • 321.636.7662

Delivery throughout Brevard County

Naturally beautiful and fun!

© 2007 Rockledge Gardens (revised KR 10/07)