

SPECIES	Rhapis excelsa
COMMON NAME	Broadleaf Lady Palm or Bamboo Palm
ORIGIN	Southern China and Taiwan
DESIGN USE	Indoor plant, understory plant, dense screens and hedges, container and plantboxes



HEIGHT

4m

SPREAD

0.30m

HABIT

It grows from multiple stems, each topped with upright fronds. The leaf sheaths are fairly persistent but when they do fall a dark green conspicuously ringed stem of leaf base scars is exposed: very similar in appearance to bamboo canes, hence the other common name bamboo palm. Individual canes can be closely ringed, or rings may be moderately spaced, depending on growing conditions.

FORM

Multi-stemmed clumps with glossy, palmate leaves divided into broad, ribbed segments. Leaf segments are single or few in young plants and increase to a dozen or more in mature plants; segments are divided to the petiole. Leaf-ends are saw-toothed unlike most other palms, occurring on slender petioles ranging from 20 to 60 cm in length. New foliage emerges from a fibrous sheath which remains attached to the base. As the plants age, the sheaths fall, revealing the bamboo-like trunks. The thin trunks of this delightful little fan palm can reach 10' in height to form sizable clusters of foliage. These trunks are covered with interesting leaf scar patterns and are wrapped with mats of brown fiber.

FLOWERS

This usually dioecious palm species produces a small inflorescence at the top of the plant with spirally-arranged, fleshy flowers containing three petals fused at the base.

FRUIT

Ripe fruit are fleshy and white, though *R. excelsa* more readily propagates via underground rhizome offshoots

CLIMATIC TOLERANCES

Temperatures as low as -5° C are tolerated by *R. excelsa* as it is quite cold hardy, particularly when grown under shelter, and it also grows in climates where it may be exposed to prolonged periods of cold weather. Very hot weather, particularly when the air is very dry, may cause damage which can be prevented by adequate watering, mulching and growing under other plants or pergolas and occasional hosing of foliage with a fine spray or mist can also help to maintain a higher relative humidity.

HORTICULTURE

Propagate from seed or division of clumps. very adaptable to soil types although neutral to slightly acid soils with good drainage and organic matter is recommended for best results. Leaves however will lose their deep green colouring, will become yellowish green and on the hotter days will probably burn.

REFERENCES

<http://www.pacsoa.org.au/palms/Rhapis/excelsa.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhapis_excelsa

http://www.floridata.com/ref/r/rhap_exc.cfm

