

FGCU Food Forest

Plant Database

Jelly Palm (*Butia capitata*)

Quick Facts

Origin: Brazil and Uruguay
Description: Medium to large palm
Culinary Uses: Fruit eaten raw, jelly, & wine. Seeds into oils & margarines
Harvest: July-October
Flower: Pinkish/Red
Cold Tolerance: 15 F

General Description: The Jelly Palm is a medium sized palm with 5-10 foot green pinnate palm leaves that arch back to the thick trunk. The palm regularly reaches 15-20 feet in length and by late summer is filled with cherry sized yellow-orange fruits. The taste of these edible fruits is known to be both sweet and tart, and make a great jelly. In their pinnate nature the leaves are typical of most palms, and in the late spring their pink flower emerges out of a woody center. This tree is rather hardy and cold tolerant.



- **Native Origin:** Jelly Palm originated in Brazil and Uruguay but is known to have been all across South America for centuries.
- **Harvesting Techniques:** The small bright yellow fruits are aplenty in late summer and fall. The Jelly Palm starts fruiting as early as June and continues as late as November. The fruits typically grow on one woody stalk off of the main spathe.
- **Season of Harvest:** Typically July through late October.
- **Culinary Uses:** The fruits have been utilized in three main ways: raw ingesting, jelly, and wine. Simply eating the fruit raw is tasty, but can be rather fibrous. Some compare it to eating a mixture of a soft fruit and sugar cane. Many prefer to chew on the fruit and eventually spit out the fiber. To make a Jelly with Sure-Jell: The fruit has a high amount of pectin present relative to other palms, but to make a jam one usually has to add a little. It is best to cut the fruit off the seed as the seed's oil, when cooked, will add a

“woody” taste. To make a batch of jelly, you need to bring about 3 cups of cut fruit to boil with 3 cups of water until there is 3.5 cups of the mixture. To finish, merely follow directions from Sure-Jell or another substitute. The seeds, which are about 45% oil, are also edible. In many countries they are used to make margarine or cooking oil, but they tend to have a woody taste.

- **Nutritional Value:** There isn't a whole lot known on the nutritional value of the fruit, but it is high in Vitamin C and fiber. The seeds are high in protein and unsaturated fats and oils.

Jelly Palm
Scientific Classification
Kingdom: Plantae
(unranked): Angiosperms
(unranked): Monocots
(unranked): Commelinids
Order: Arecales
Family: Arecaceae
Genus: <i>Butia</i>
Species: <i>B. capitata</i>

Sources

San Marcos Growers Database. (2009). *Butia capitata* – Jelly or Pindo Palm. Retrieved from http://www.smgrowers.com/products/plants/plantdisplay.asp?plant_id=1169.

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Retrieved February 15, 2013 from the OLPC Wiki: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Butia_capitata.