

Cuba, Central America

Common names: **English:** Cuban royal palm.**Ecology:** Palms of the lowlands in the Caribbean, some Roystonea species are said to be indicators of good soil conditions. Cultivated in Uganda they do well in rich well-drained soils but grow to smaller dimensions in poor soils.**Uses:** Ornamental (avenue tree), pig feed (seeds), thatch (leaves).**Description:** A handsome palm which reaches 25 m with a prominent **shiny green "crown shaft" above the smooth trunk. BARK: light grey-white, smooth and ringed with prominent leaf scars**, swollen slightly at the base and **thickened around the middle. LEAVES:** pinnate, to 8 m long, **arching downwards, leaflets soft, brilliant green, narrow, about 75 cm x 2 cm wide**, growing in **4 rows in different planes**, giving a ragged appearance. The soft green leaf bases to 2 m are wrapped around to form the "crown shaft". **FLOWERS:** arise below the leaves from a green pointed "spadix" or envelope about 1 m long, directed upwards at an angle. When it splits open, long branched stalks with pale yellow flowers emerge; distinctive violet stamens. **FRUIT:** in 3 parts, green then red, becoming dark brown to **blue-black, rounded 1.5 cm across**, the flesh rich in oil and carbohydrates. Brown seeds inside. A single fruit cluster can weigh up to 50 kg.**Propagation:** Seedlings (sow seeds in pots), and wildings.**Seed:** These palms produce an enormous amount of fruit which can be collected from the ground under them.**treatment:** scarifying the outer fibrous coat will set the seed free and hasten germination.**storage:** store dry fruits in a dry cool place.**Management:** Fast growing.**Remarks:** *Roystonea* spp. are among the most elegant of the large palms and are widely cultivated. The high oil content of the fruit makes them good stock feed. Popular with nursery men as the seedlings are much sought after and fetch high prices. Mostly planted widely spaced as an ornamental.



flowering branch



flower detail

