

# KEY TO THE MOST COMMONLY CULTIVATED PALMS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION  
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1. Leaves pinnate or bipinnate.
  2. Leaves bipinnate.
    3. Habit clustered . . . . . *Caryota mitis*
    3. Habit solitary.
      4. Leaves tightly clustered at top of trunk; leaf bases with dark brown indumentum . . . . . *Caryota gigas*
      4. Leaves distributed along trunk; leaf bases with gray indumentum . . . . . *Caryota maxima*
  2. Leaves pinnate.
    5. Pinnae induplicate.
      6. Proximal pinnae reduced to spine-like organs; pinnae apices pointed.
        7. Habit clustered.
          8. Pinnae green, mostly in 1 plane . . . . . *Phoenix reclinata*
          8. Pinnae variously grayish green, mostly in several planes . . . . . *Phoenix dactylifera*
        7. Habit solitary.
          9. Trunk massive . . . . . *Phoenix canariensis*
          9. Trunk small to moderate.
            10. Pinnae variously grayish green, mostly in several planes . . . . . *Phoenix dactylifera*
            10. Pinnae green, in 1 plane.
              11. Trunk moderate; pinnae glossy . . . . . *Phoenix rupicola*
              11. Trunk small; pinnae not glossy . . . . . *Phoenix roebelinii*
        6. Proximal pinnae not reduced to spine-like organs; pinnae apices jaggedly toothed . . . . . *Arenga engleri*
      5. Pinnae reduplicate.
        12. Leaf bases tubular, forming a crownshaft.
          13. Pinnae apices jaggedly toothed . . . . . *Wodyetia bifurcata*
          13. Pinnae apices pointed.
            14. Habit clustered . . . . . *Dypsis lutescens*
            14. Habit solitary.
              15. Leaves recurved; crownshaft with waxy-white indumentum . . . . . *Hedyscepe canterburyana*
              15. Leaves not recurved; crownshaft lacking waxy-white indumentum.

- 16. Crownshaft typically swollen.
  - 17. Leaves ascending to spreading; crownshaft with brownish indumentum . . . . . *Rhopalostylis baueri*
  - 17. Leaves stiffly ascending; crownshaft lacking brownish indumentum . . . *Rhopalostylis sapida*
- 16. Crownshaft not typically swollen.
  - 18. Pinnae in several planes . . . . *Roystonea regia*
  - 18. Pinnae in 1 plane.
    - 19. Pinnae green abaxially . . . . . *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*
    - 19. Pinnae silver gray abaxially.
      - 20. Crownshaft purplish . . . . . *Archontophoenix purpurea*
      - 20. Crownshaft green . . . . . *Archontophoenix alexandrae*
- 12. Leaf bases not tubular, not forming a crownshaft.
  - 21. Leaves arranged in 3 ranks . . . . . *Dypsis decaryi*
  - 21. Leaves not arranged in 3 ranks.
    - 22. Pinnae clustered in groups . . . . . *Syagrus romanzoffiana*
    - 22. Pinnae not clustered in groups, +/- regularly arranged.
      - 23. Leaves recurved; pinnae ascending.
        - 24. Pinnae green; inflorescence unbranched . . . . . *Howea belmoreana*
        - 24. Pinnae variously grayish; inflorescence branched . . . . . *Butia odorata (B. capitata)*
      - 23. Leaves not recurved; pinnae not ascending.
        - 25. Pinnae drooping . . . . . *Howea forsteriana*
        - 25. Pinnae not drooping.
          - 26. Trunk massive, to 3 feet diam. *Jubaea chilensis*
          - 26. Trunk moderate, 1-2 feet diam. *Ravenea rivularis*
  - 1. Leaves palmate.
    - 27. Habit clustered.
      - 28. Stems slender, 1-2 inches diam., spreading by rhizomes.
        - 29. Leaf blade segments to 10 inches long, sides parallel . . . . . *Rhapis excelsa*
        - 29. Leaf blade segments to 18 inches long, sides curved . . . . . *Rhapis humilis*
      - 28. Stems moderate to large, 3-12 inches diam., not spreading by rhizomes.
        - 30. Leaf base margins with long, woody, spine-like organs . . . . . *Rhapidophyllum hystrix*
        - 30. Leaf base margins lacking long, woody, spine-like organs.
          - 31. Leaf blade green . . . . . *Acoelorrhaphe wrightii*
          - 31. Leaf blade variously grayish green.
            - 32. Petioles with minute teeth . . . . . *Serenoa repens*

- 32. Petioles with large teeth . . . . . *Chamaerops humilis*
- 27. Habit solitary.
  - 33. Leaf base margins with long, woody, spine-like organs . . . . .  
 . . . . . *Trithrinax brasiliensis*
  - 33. Leaf base margins lacking long, woody, spine-like organs.
    - 34. Petioles lacking prominent teeth.
      - 35. Trunk covered with long hairs.
        - 36. Leaf blade 2-3 feet wide; inflorescences yellow . . . . .  
 . . . . . *Trachycarpus fortunei*
        - 36. Leaf blade to 2 feet wide; inflorescence greenish . . . . .  
 . . . . . *Trachycarpus wagnerianus*
      - 35. Trunk lacking long hairs.
        - 37. Leaf base margins modified into flat, cloth-like sheets.
          - 38. Leaf blade segment apices drooping.
            - 39. Blade divided ca. 3/4 to base; fruits brown to black . .  
 . . . . . *Livistona australis*
            - 39. Blade divided ca. 1/2 to base; fruits greenish to blue-  
 green . . . . . *Livistona chinensis*
          - 38. Leaf blade segment apices not drooping; fruits yellow-  
 brown to black . . . . . *Brahea edulis*
        - 37. Leaf base margins not modified into flat, cloth-like sheets.
          - 40. Trunk short or nearly lacking . . . . . *Sabal minor*
          - 40. Trunk elongate, well developed.
            - 41. Leaf blade conspicuously costapalmate, greenish . . .  
 . . . . . *Sabal palmetto*
            - 41. Leaf blade not conspicuously costapalmate, variously  
 grayish green to white . . . . . *Bismarckia nobilis*
  - 34. Petioles with prominent teeth.
    - 42. Leaf blade variously grayish green to white . . . . *Brahea armata*
    - 42. Leaf blade green.
      - 43. Leaf base margins modified into flat, cloth-like sheets.
        - 44. Blade divided ca. 3/4 to base; fruits brown to black . . . .  
 . . . . . *Livistona australis*
        - 44. Blade divided ca. 1/2 to base; fruits greenish to blue-  
 green . . . . . *Livistona chinensis*
      - 43. Leaf base margins not modified into flat, cloth-like sheets.
        - 45. Trunk to 15 inches diam., abruptly flared at base; leaf  
 base reddish brown; leaf blade bright green and with  
 patch of white indumentum at base abaxially . . . . .  
 . . . . . *Washingtonia robusta*
        - 45. Trunk 18-30 inches diam., not abruptly flared at base;  
 leaf base green; leaf blade dull green and lacking patch  
 of white indumentum at base abaxially . . . . .  
 . . . . . *Washingtonia filifera*