

**GROWING**  
***Dypsis lanceolata***  
**IN PALM BEACH COUNTY**

*Submitted by Charlie Beck*

*Dypsis lanceolata* is a medium size pinnate palm native to the Comoro Islands near Madagascar. This palm grows in rainforest at elevations of 1,000-3,000' in habitat. It grows in light shade to full sun. Stems reach heights of 15-18'. This palm is usually clustering but can occasionally be solitary. Stems are quite attractive - waxy green with tan leaf scars. The crownshaft can be covered with reddish pubescence. The leaves are slightly irregular and are somewhat plumose and arching. The leaflets are broad and are puckered similar to *Chamaedorea oblongata*.

Our oldest specimen of *D. lanceolata* is 10 years old. Its tallest stem is 13' in overall height. The stems are 3-1/4" in diameter and the leaves measure 8' long. We have two specimen plants in very light shade and have one planted in full shade. Both light conditions seem to suit this palm. The palm planted in full shade has not yet suckered.

This palm is well adapted to growing in Palm Beach County. Although reference books claim that this palm is cold sensitive, all three of our plants showed no damage due to our record cold winters of 2009-2010. Reference books also claim excellent drainage is required but our specimens have been inundated for weeks at a time with no ill effect. I have not noticed any minor nutritional deficiencies on this palm when fertilized at recommended rates. We did have a stem die but a new bud sprouted from the base of the dead stem. At the base of another live stem we also had a side shoot appear.

*D. lanceolata* could be confused with *D. pambana* or *D. cabadae*. *D. pambana* is a much faster growing palm with a larger stem caliper and longer fronds with leaflets in a single plane. *D. cabadae* is about the same scale as *D. lanceolata* but the leaflets form a V when looking down the rachis. *D. cabadae* is also more cold sensitive than *D. lanceolata* and *D. pambana*.

Give this beautiful *Dypsis* a try. It has a distinctive tropical look and it does not take up much space. The 15-18' ultimate height is just right for a foundation planting. It thrives in our sandy soils and seems to love our humid climate. (All photographs for this article were provided by Charlie Beck)



Stem sideshoot



Leaf sheath



Stem detail