

GROWING *Satakentia liukuensis* IN PALM BEACH COUNTY

Submitted by Charlie Beck

Satakentia liukuensis is a medium-sized palm. It displays a long purplish brown crownshaft which is especially beautiful after shedding an old frond (See photo on page 2). The pinnate fronds are deep green and have a very formal appearance. This is a self-cleaning palm which readily loses old fronds before they become unsightly. Unlike the Royal Palm with its heavy fronds, *Satakentia* fronds are much less likely to damage understory plantings when released.

S. liukuensis is endemic to moist forests in the Ryukyu Archipelago. It is closely allied to *Clinostigma*.

S. liukuensis is monoecious and grows 60 feet tall in habitat. In 14 years, our oldest specimen has grown 15 feet to the bottom of the five foot long crownshaft. The leaves measure 11 feet long and the stem measures 12 inches in diameter at waist height. Twelve specimens planted in 2005 have already formed wood below their crownshaft.

GROWING CONDITIONS IN OUR GARDEN FOR <i>Satakentia liukuensis</i>	
Location	4 miles from ocean in suburban Lantana
Soil	Sand over a layer of hardpan (pineland flatwood habitat)
Irrigation	¾ inch applied twice a week
Flooding	Periodic inundation in sandy soil acceptable
Fertilization	3 times a year with Palm special analysis
Light	Sun or partial shade
Micronutrient Deficiencies	None observed
Insect Damage	None observed
Hurricane Resistance	Excellent

S. liukuensis grows equally well in sandy soil or on limestone rock. Most experts recommend planting in a shady location so as the palm ages it grows into the sun. I have had good luck planting three gallon size plants in the full sun.

Years ago *S. liukuensis* had limited availability so it was an expensive palm. Today it is readily available and is more reasonably priced.

This is the perfect palm for Palm Beach County. It was unfazed by our past winter cold temperatures. It also looked great after our 2004 and 2005 hurricanes. We were so impressed with how well these palms held up in the hurricanes, we planted an additional 12 specimens in our garden in 2005. Our *Satakentia* have never displayed any nutritional deficiencies.

Plant this palm for its formal appearance, interesting crownshaft, and resistance to high winds and cold temperatures. Smaller than a Royal Palm, *S. liukuensis* will fit into most home garden landscapes.

I have had 100 percent success with this palm. *S. liukuensis* is definitely on my list of top five pinnate canopy palms.



***Satakentia liukuensis* growing in the Holton garden.**

(Photo by Dale Holton)



***Satakentia liukuensis* crownshaft in the Beck garden.**
(Photo by Charlie Beck)



***Satakentia liukuensis* growing in Homestead**



Five year old *S. liukuensis* growing in the Beck garden