

Butia capitata

[Synonyms : *Arecastrum romanzoffiana*, *Arecastrum romanzoffiana* var. *australe*, *Arecastrum romanzoffiana* var. *micropindo*, *Butia bonnettii*, *Butia capitata* var. *deliciosa*, *Butia capitata* var. *elegantissima*, *Butia capitata* var. *erythrospatha*, *Butia capitata* var. *lilaceiflora*, *Butia capitata* var. *nehrlingiana*, *Butia capitata* var. *odorata*, *Butia capitata* var. *pulposa*, *Butia capitata* var. *pygmaea*, *Butia capitata* var. *subglobosa*, *Butia capitata* var. *virescens*, *Butia leiospatha*, *Butia nehrlingiana*, *Cocos australis*, *Cocos blumenavia*, *Cocos bonnettii*, *Cocos capitata*, *Cocos coronata*, *Cocos datil*, *Cocos odorata*, *Cocos pulposa*, *Cocos romanzoffiana*, *Syagrus capitata*, *Syagrus coronata*, *Syagrus romanzoffiana*]

JELLY PALM is an evergreen palm. Native to central and southern South America (particularly Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay), it has tiny creamy-yellow to reddish flowers.

It is also known as *Butia* (Brazilian), *Butiapalm* (Swedish), *Butiapalmu* (Finnish), Chilean wine palm, Nicuri palm, Ouricuri palm, Pindo date, Pindo palm, Queen palm, South American jelly palm, Uricury palm, and Wine palm.

The flowers are pollinated by insects and the wind.

Capitata is derived from Latin *capito* (man with a large head) meaning ‘having a dense head’ with reference to the fronds.

The small fibrous date-like, yellow to orange ripe fruit (they are claimed to have a sweet apricot-like (*Prunus armeniaca*) taste) are eaten raw and can also be puréed. They are used to make jams, various preserves, pies, cakes and wine too. In Uruguay the fruit are steeped to make a popular alcoholic drink.

A substitute coffee has been made locally from the ground seed – and the seed, which have an oil content of up 45%, are also used commercially to make margarine.

Medicinally, some of the American Indian tribes in Brazil have eaten the fruit flesh to cure worms.