

Jubaea chilensis

[Synonyms : *Cocos chilensis*, *Jubaea spectabilis*, *Micrococos chilensis*, *Palma chilensis*]

CHILEAN WINE-PALM is a palm. Native to central Chile it has tiny coconut-like, yellow fruit.

It is also known as Chile cocopalm, Cokernut, Coquito palm, *Coquitopalme* (German), Honey palm, *Honigpalme* (German), Little cokernut, Pygmy coconut, Syrup palm, and Wine palm.

These palms are threatened in the wild and Chile has imposed a protection order on the few remaining stands – a circumstance that has arisen through over-collection of the sap. [For this the palm is beheaded and the massive bole is tapped and one tree can yield about 300/400 litres. Once the sap has been harvested, a process that can take several months, the palm is then felled.]

The small purple and yellow flowers are pollinated by the wind and by various insects.

Chilensis means ‘of or from Chile’.

These attractive feathery palms are sometimes cultivated in urban avenues.

Locally the fresh sap has long been drunk as a refreshing beverage. It has also been boiled to a syrup (known as ‘palm honey’) or treacle – or fermented to make wine. The seeds, which are sold locally for eating and have been candied whole as sweetmeats, yield an edible oil.

The leaves have been used for thatching and basketry, and they have also been made into brushes. Plant fibre has provided mattress stuffing – and trunk fibres have also been used for making paper.