

Comparative Seed Manual: ARECACEAE

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This seed manual consists of photos and relevant information on plant species housed in the Integrative Subsistence Laboratory at the Anthropology Department, University of California, Santa Barbara. The impetus for the creation of this manual was to enable UCSB graduate students to have access to comparative materials when making in-field identifications. Most of the plant species included in the manual come from New World locales with an emphasis on Eastern North America, California, Mexico, Central America, and the South American Andes.

Published references consulted¹:

1998. Moerman, Daniel E. *Native American ethnobotany*. Vol. 879. Portland, OR: Timber press.

2009. Moerman, Daniel E. *Native American medicinal plants: an ethnobotanical dictionary*. OR: Timber Press.

2010. Moerman, Daniel E. *Native American food plants: an ethnobotanical dictionary*. OR: Timber Press.

Species included herein:

Acrocomia mexicana

Bactris gasipaes

Phytelephas aequatorialis

Attalea liebmanni

¹ **Disclaimer:** Information on relevant edible and medicinal uses comes from a variety of sources, both published and internet-based; this manual does **NOT** recommend using any plants as food or medicine without first consulting a medical professional.

Acrocomia mexicana



Family: Arecaceae

Common Names: Coyol, Tuk, Maap, Ya cul, Aca

Habitat and Growth Habit: Archaeobotanical evidence indicates that this plant was distributed in many areas of Mesoamerica. This plant is found in the tropical Americas ranging from Belize, Honduras, Mexico, and Panama.

Human Uses: The fruit is edible and is high in calories and fat content comparatively. The inner meat of the fruit can be eaten fresh or saved in pots for later use. The kernels are used to make a drink. Medicinally, this plant can be used as a treatment for blood in the urine and diabetes. Recent research indicates that a new tetrahydropyrane compound in the fruit can be responsible for lowering blood sugar.

Sources Consulted:

<https://ethnobiology.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/JoE/10-2/Lentz.pdf>, accessed February 8, 2019.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0031686596000192>, accessed February 8, 2019.

Bactris gasipaes





Family: Arecaceae

Common Names: Peach palm, Pejivalle, Peach-nut, Pewa, Pejibaye

Habitat and Growth Habit: This plant grows in tropical climates and is indigenous to regions near the Amazon of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Brazil. It can be found in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, French Guiana, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panamá, Peru, and Venezuela.

Human Uses: The wood has been used to make weapons: spears, satires, bows, and arrowheads. The raw flesh of the fruit itself is often used to make a fermented alcoholic beverage. The fruit can be boiled in salt water and is often boiled with a type of meat. The seeds are edible but are not easily digested. The young flowers are also edible, and humans have used them to feed livestock. Smaller pieces of the plant have also been used for weaving. Sap has been extracted and fermented to produce wine. Recent studies show that the fruit contains seven essential amino acids, which demonstrates a considerable nutritional value.

Sources Consulted:

http://www.palmpedia.net/wiki/Bactris_gasipaes, accessed February 8, 2019.

<https://hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/morton/pejibaye.html>, accessed February 8, 2019.

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/t0646e/T0646E01.htm>, accessed February 8, 2019.

<http://eol.org/pages/1130861/overview>, accessed February 8, 2019.

Phytelephas aequatorialis



Family: Arecaceae

Common Names: Vegetable ivory, Tagua, Coroso, Corozo, Jarina

Habitat and Growth Habit: This species is found in forests in South America, West Ecuador, and Colombia.

Human Uses: Seeds were often used to produce buttons resembling ivory. The nuts and seeds are used to carve figurines and other sorts of recreational items. Serving as an ivory substitute, the seeds can also be used in creating jewelry. The seed is edible, and the leaves can be cooked. The orange portions of the fruit are eaten as a delicacy. There are no known medicinal uses.

Sources Consulted:

http://www.palmpedia.net/wiki/Phytelephas_aequatorialis, accessed February 8, 2019.

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/v0784e/v0784e10.htm>, accessed February 8, 2019.

<http://tropical.theferns.info/viewtropical.php?id=Phytelephas+aequatorialis>, accessed February 8, 2019.

Attalea liebmannii



Family: Arecaceae

Common Names: Palma de coyol real, Palma real

Habitat and Growth Habit: This flood tolerant palm would be found in areas of Veracruz, Mexico. Other regions of growth involve the coastal wetlands of the Gulf of Mexico.

Human Uses: The fruits of this palm are used in human food as well as feed for domesticated animals. Other portions are used for construction of crafts and in religious contexts.

Sources Consulted:

http://unibio.unam.mx/irekani/handle/123456789/47050?mode=full&submit_simple>Show+full+item+record&proyecto=Irekani, accessed February 8, 2019.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=qzvQjpGjwYOC&pg=PT937&lpg=PT937&dq=Attalea+liebmannii&source=bl&ots=FM2VVcIOWX&sig=ACfU3UOrEwkkEtZYJSdZEyB9vuyddtelig&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj49u295qzgAhU4ITQIHdlMDUs4ChDoATABegQICRAB#v=onepage&q=Attalea%20liebmannii&f=false>, accessed February 8, 2019.

http://www.itto.int/files/itto_project_db_input/3000/Technical/Combined%20papers%20on%20scientific%20journals_RED-PD%20045-11-Rev.pdf, accessed February 8, 2019.