



# *Coccothrinax argentata* Silverpalm<sup>1</sup>

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson<sup>2</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

This slow-growing, small, native Florida palm can reach 20 feet in height but is usually seen at 6 to 10 feet with a spread of six feet (Fig. 1). The slender Silverpalm has distinctive dark blue-green, drooping, delicate, deeply divided palmate leaves which have a beautiful silver color beneath, providing a bright glint in the landscape when the leaves sway in the wind. The six-inch-wide trunk is either smooth and grey or is sometimes covered with woven, burlap-like fiber. The small, white flowers are borne in profusion on two-foot-long stalks, hidden among the leaves during the summer. The small, round, purple fruits ripen in late summer and fall.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scientific name:** *Coccothrinax argentata*

**Pronunciation:** koe-koe-THRY-nacks  
ar-jen-TAY-tuh

**Common name(s):** Silverpalm, Thatchpalm

**Family:** *Areaceae*

**USA hardiness zones:** 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** native to North America

**Uses:** container or above-ground planter; recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; specimen

**Availability:** grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

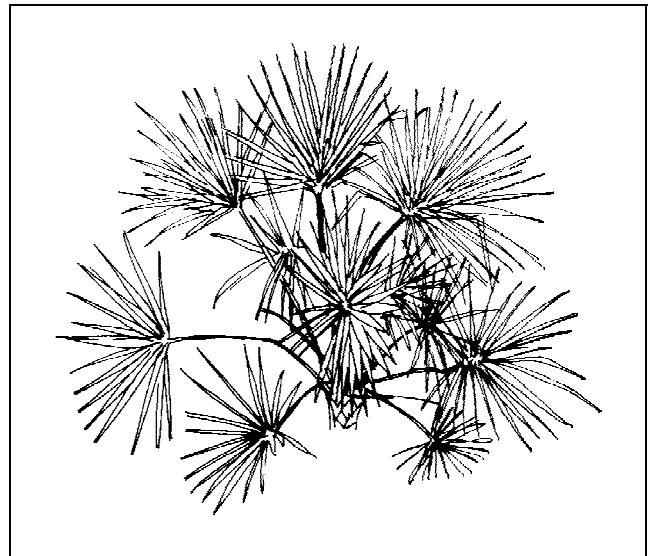


Figure 1. Young Silverpalm.

## DESCRIPTION

**Height:** 6 to 15 feet

**Spread:** 6 to 7 feet

**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

**Crown shape:** palm; upright

**Crown density:** open

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** coarse

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-176, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: November 1993.
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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** spiral (Fig. 3)

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** star-shaped

**Leaf venation:** palmate

**Leaf type and persistence:** broadleaf evergreen;  
evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** 18 to 36 inches

**Leaf color:** blue or blue-green; green; silver

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

### Flower

**Flower color:** white

**Flower characteristics:** inconspicuous and not  
showy; summer flowering

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** round

**Fruit length:** < .5 inch

**Fruit covering:** fleshy

**Fruit color:** purple

**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife;  
inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter  
problem

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** grow mostly upright and will  
not droop; not particularly showy; should be grown  
with a single leader; no thorns

**Pruning requirement:** needs little pruning to develop  
a strong structure

**Breakage:** resistant

**Crown shaft:** no

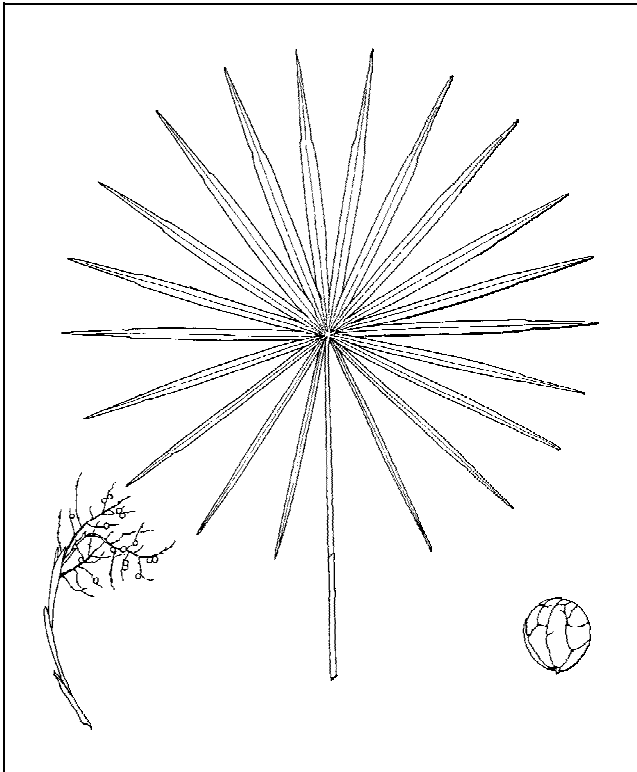
### Culture

**Light requirement:** tree grows in part shade/part sun;  
tree grows in the shade; tree grows in full sun

**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline;  
well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** high



**Figure 3.** Foliage of Silverpalm.

### **Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases are of major concern.

### **Other**

**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding tree:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** little, if any, potential at this time

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** not known to be susceptible

**Pest resistance:** no pests are normally seen on the tree

### **USE AND MANAGEMENT**

This palm is most suited for residential and commercial landscapes where the unusual blue foliage can be appreciated. It makes a nice accent in a shrub border, and can be massed together to create a dramatic colorful impact. Place it in a low-growing groundcover to provide an exclamation point in the landscape.

Growing in full sun or partial shade, Silverpalm will tolerate any well-drained soil. The palm will grow straight up and provide a beautiful blue accent, even in areas receiving only two or three hours of sun. It is highly salt-tolerant and is especially useful for coastal locations and for soils with a high pH.

Propagation is by seed.