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Roystonea Regia

Roystonea regia (*regius* is Latin for 'royal') is a solitary palm from Cuba (of course!), and grows to 15 m or more tall, sometimes as tall as 30 m, with a smoothly sculpted grey trunk irregularly enlarged below, more slender above, and banded with leaf-scars. Leaves are pinnate, 4–6 m long, with numerous (about 100) slightly plumose leaflets, and a green crownshaft at least 1.5 m long extending down the trunk.

The palms of this species have the ability to release their fronds easily in strong winds, enabling them to resist being blown over in hurricanes. After such an event they quickly renew their foliage. The inflorescences occur beneath the crownshaft, emerging from a narrow, horn-shaped bract. The flowers on the branched panicles are whitish, unisexual, and contain both sexes on the same panicle. The fruit is a surprisingly small oblong drupe a little over 1 cm in length that ripens to a dark purple. Propagation is from seed.

Roystonea regia is, unusually for a palm, a fast grower. It is tolerant of salt drift, and will grow near the sea so long as it is set back a little from the sand. Like all the Royal Palms, it is not very particular about soil. It does, however, have high light requirements, and likes bright sunny conditions. Although it looks its best when the water supply is good, it does originate from the dry hills around Havana, and is fairly drought-tolerant.

Mix 1/2 each of potting soil, and sand with a small garden trowel for a potted plant.

Plant seeds at a depth of 2 to 4 cm.

Find an outside location with partial shade. Water then let the soil dry before re-watering.

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