

Roystonea princeps



Roystonea princeps (Beccari) Burret

PALMAE

Synonym: *Oreodoxa princeps* Beccari

Common Names: **Swamp Cabbage, Morass Royal, Royal Palm**

A palm 5-15 metres or more tall, unarmed, stem solitary, trunk irregularly enlarged below, more slender above. Endemic to Jamaica.

St. Elizabeth, Westmoreland

HABITAT: Restricted to western parishes, in small colonies or as scattered individuals, in morass and in **poorly drained lowlands**, uncommon and local; sea level-150 metres.

BARK: **Smooth** trunk, gray, banded with leaf-scars.

LEAVES: **Pinnate**, leaflets disposed in different planes, 4-6 metres long; leaf-sheath green, tubular, forming an erect crown shaft 1.5 metres or more long, leaflets linear-elliptic, with a single large conspicuous nerve.

FLOWERS: Inflorescence shortly pedunculate or sessile; borne at the base of the prominent green crown shaft; large inner bract not grooved; whitish flowers, not sunk in pits, petals 3-3.2 mm long, 1.5 mm broad; stamens 6, lavender to purple. Flowering throughout the year, but mainly December to January.

FRUIT: Fruit usually 1-seeded, drupe-like, pear-shaped, with the neck curved to one side, about 15 mm long, greenish-yellow to purple, seed small. Fruiting throughout the year.

NOTE: **It is difficult to distinguish this from the last species, *Roystonea altissima*. The easiest field method for identification is to use habitat and distribution. *Roystonea princeps* is a bog, morass and swamp species, not in uplands and not to premontane elevations.**