Cardboard Palm

Zamia furfuracea

Height: 4 feet

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 8b

Other Names: Cardboard Cycad, Jamaican Sago, Mexican Cycad



Cardboard Palm
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Description:

A vigorous cycad with a woody stem that is typically underground, unless on a shallow, rocky site; deep green, arching pinnate leaves are graceful in form and texture; female may produce rusty brown cones with crimson red seeds



Cardboard Palm foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Cardboard Palm is primarily grown for its highly ornamental fruit. The dark brown fruits with coppery-bronze overtones are held in abundance in spectacular cones from late summer to mid fall. It has attractive green evergreen foliage. The narrow pinnately compound leaves are highly ornamental and remain green throughout the winter.

Landscape Attributes

Cardboard Palm is a multi-stemmed evergreen shrub with a shapely form and gracefully arching branches. It lends an extremely fine and delicate texture to the landscape composition which can make it a great accent feature on this basis alone.

This shrub will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and should not require much pruning, except when necessary, such as to remove dieback. It is a good choice for attracting birds and butterflies to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Insects

Cardboard Palm is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting



Cardboard Palm
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Cardboard Palm will grow to be about 4 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. It has a low canopy. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live to a ripe old age of 120 years or more; think of this as a heritage shrub for future generations! This is a dioecious species, meaning that individual plants are either male or female. Only the females will produce fruit, and a male variety of the same species is required nearby as a pollinator.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist growing conditions, but will not tolerate any standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in sandy soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America, and parts of it are known to be toxic to humans and animals, so care should be exercised in planting it around children and pets.

Cardboard Palm makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its height, it is often used as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.