

FLORIDA THATCH PALM

Thrinax radiata Lodd. ex J.A. & J.H. Schultes

Synonyms: none

Family: Arecaceae (palm)

FNAI Ranks: G4G5/S2

Legal Status: US-none FL-Endangered

Wetland Status: US-FAC*+ FL-FAC



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Field Description: This is a small palm that can attain, in the Keys, an extreme height of 30 feet. Its trunk is slender, most often with an enlarged root mass at its base. Leaves are palmate (fan-shaped) and plicate (with folds), with a distinctive pointed yellow hastula (intersection of leaf blade with petiole). The long, arched, unarmed petiole may be 3 feet or more and leaf segments are divided to about half their length. The flower stalk, usually longer than the leaves, holding clusters of bisexual small white blossoms on its lateral branches, will droop under the weight of its numerous fruit. These globular fruit are smooth, green then white at maturity, single-seeded, drupe-like, on short stems and in clusters on the lateral branchlets of the long flower stalk.

Similar Species: Very similar to *T. morrisii*, but with greener leaf undersides and petioles that are not split at the base.

Florida thatch palm

Thrinax radiata

Related Rare Species: Very similar to *T. morrisii*, but with greener leaf undersides and petioles that are not split at the base.

Habitat: On calcareous soils in rockland hammocks, pine rocklands, upper rock barrens, and larger coastal berms. Cultivated in South Florida.

Best Survey Season: Spring.

Range-wide Distribution: South Florida, the West Indies, Mexico, and Central America.

Conservation Status: While this species is commonly cultivated as a landscape plant in Florida, this palm is only rarely encountered in the wild. In the wild, this species is mainly distributed throughout South Florida's coral cay archipelago, which represents the northern edge of this its range. Today, much of this area is protected in either publicly or privately held conservation areas.

Protection and Management: Protect coastal hammocks from clearing, development and erosion. Eradicate invasive plant species, such as Brazilian pepper.

References: Wunderlin and Hansen 2011, Little 1979.