

## 16. **COCOS** Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 2: 1188. 1753.

椰子属 ye zi shu

Stems large, solitary, gray, often leaning. Leaves 25–30, pinnate; leaf sheaths open, fibrous; pinnae linear, 1-veined, numerous, regularly arranged along rachis, spreading in same plane. Inflorescences branched to 1 order, borne among leaves, covered by a prophyll and woody, persistent peduncular bract; flowers unisexual, borne in triads at bases of rachillae, male only toward apices. Fruit large, 1-seeded; germination adjacent; eophylls undivided.

One species: widely introduced and cultivated throughout tropical areas of the world, especially along sandy coasts.

### 1. **Cocos nucifera** Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 2: 1188. 1753.

椰子 ye zi

*Cocos indica* Royle; *C. nana* Griffith.

Stems to 20 m tall, 30 cm or more in diam. Pinnae to 100 per side of rachis, regularly arranged and stiffly spreading in same plane. Inflorescences borne among leaves. Fruits greenish to reddish brown, ovoid to irregularly globose, to 30 × 20 cm.

Commonly planted at low elevations, occasionally to 1000 m.

Guangdong, Hainan (especially common), Taiwan, Yunnan [coastal areas throughout the tropics].

The coconut is an important commercial crop, producing coconut oil, coir, and toddy. Coconut oil is obtained from the dried endosperm (known as copra) and has been used in the manufacture of soap and margarine. Coir is obtained from the fibrous mesocarp and is used to weave mats and rugs. Toddy is sugar-containing sap, which is tapped from unopened inflorescences and often fermented into an alcoholic drink. Apart from these major uses, the coconut has a host of minor uses, especially as an ornamental plant. In Hainan, coconut milk from unripe fruits is sold both fresh and tinned.

