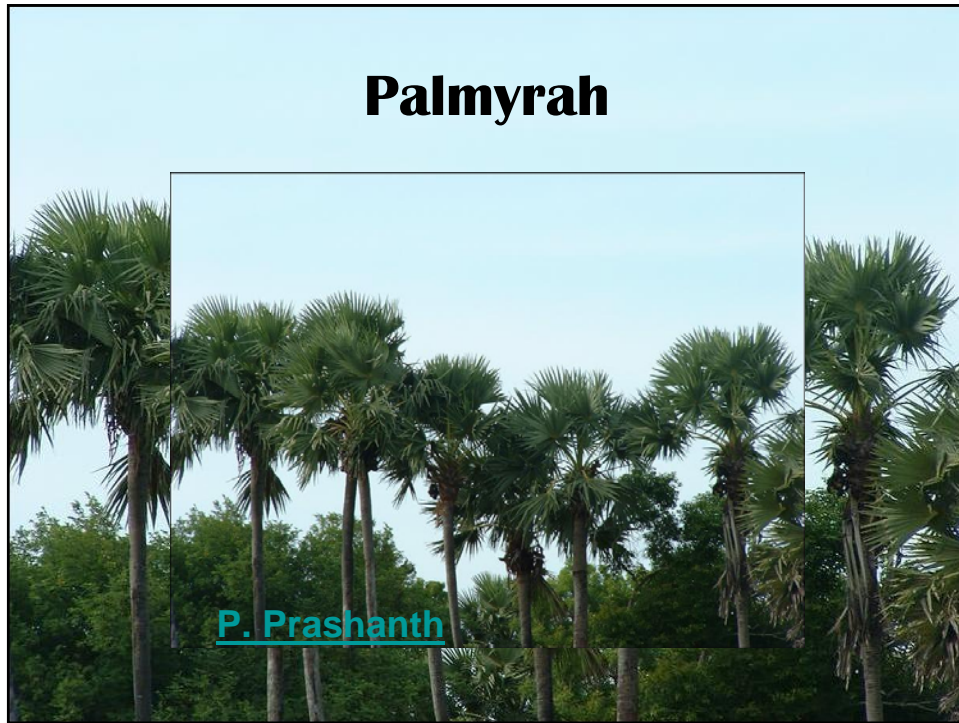


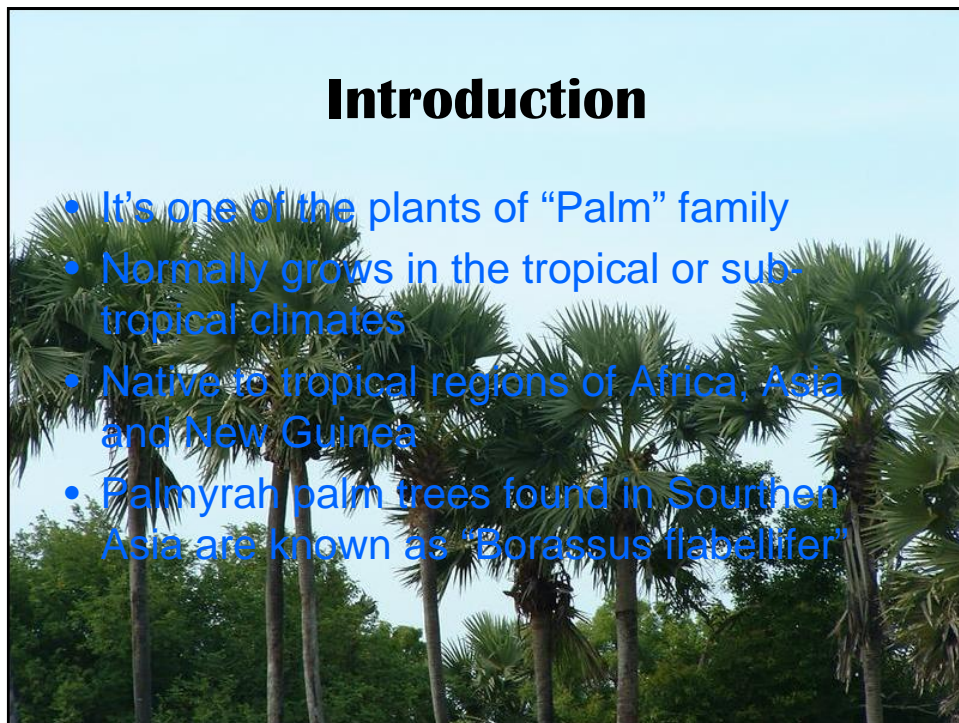
Palmyrah



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Introduction

- It's one of the plants of "Palm" family
- Normally grows in the tropical or sub-tropical climates
- Native to tropical regions of Africa, Asia and New Guinea
- Palmyrah palm trees found in Southern Asia are known as "Borassus flabellifer"



Palmyrah Species

- *Borassus aethiopicum* - African Palmyra Palm (Tropical Africa)
- *Borassus flabellifer* - Asian Palmyra Palm (Southern Asia)
- *Borassus heineanus* - New Guinea Palmyra Palm (New Guinea)
- *Borassus madagascariensis* - Madagascar Palmyra Palm (Madagascar)
- *Borassus sambiranensis* - Sambirano Palmyra Palm (Madagascar)

Physical Characteristics

- These are tall palms (grows up to 30m)
- The leaves are long, fan-shaped, 2 to 3 m in length
- The flowers are small and normally found in densely clustered spikes
- Fruits are large, brown and round shaped

Leaves & Fruits



Palmyrah Leaves



Palmyrah Fruits

Cultivation & Uses

- These plants are economically very useful
- Widely cultivated in the tropical regions
- Mostly it is cultivated as a intercrop in the agricultural fields in Sri Lanka
- The leaves are very strong when seasoned; they are used for thatching, mats, baskets, fans, hats, umbrellas and as writing material

Uses

- The stalks are used to make fences and also produce a strong, wiry fiber suitable for cordage and brushes
- The black timber is hard, heavy, and durable and is highly valued for construction



Uses

- The young plants are cooked as a vegetable or roasted and pounded to make meal
- The fruits are eaten roasted or raw, and the young, jellylike seeds are eaten also



Jellylike seed

Uses

- The jellylike seed is a famous and delicious summer food; the British called this tender fruit Ice-Apple.
- When the top portion of the young fruit is cut off, you will find three sockets inside, sometimes two but rarely one, in which the jellylike seed is found.
- The season of Palmyra fruit is May

Uses

- A sugary sap, called toddy, can be obtained from the young inflorescence ones. Toddy is fermented to make a beverage called arrack.



Uses

- The collected sugar sap is concentrated to make a crude sugar called jaggery (It is mainly done in Java island, Indonesia)
- It is called "Gula Jawa" (Javanese sugar) in Indonesia and is widely used in the Javanese cuisine
- The tree sap has high medicinal values and used in rural medicine.

Conservation

- The "Chena cultivation" and urbanization are the main threats to the Palmyrah fields in Sri Lanka
- To preserve the existing Palmyrah fields and to help those in the palmyrah plantations industry the government has created "Palmyrah Development Board" under the Ministry of Plantations Industries.

Conservation

- To preserve the palmyrah field the government has banned cutting of palmyrah trees illegally and also taken measures to grow palmyrah trees in some areas
- The palmyrah development board helps those in the palmyrah industry by giving incentives and by helping them to market the products in Sri Lanka and abroad.

