

CYCADACEAE

***Cycas circinalis* L.**

Vernacular names : Hindi: Jangli-madan-mast-ka-phul; Kan.: Mundicalu; Or.: Arguna, Odasa-mari; Tam.: Cannigay, Madanagama; Tel.: Kamkshi, Perita; Sans.: Vavaguna.

Distribution : INDIA: Restricted to the Western Ghats, in the states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and the south of Maharashtra. Endemic.



***Cycas circinalis* L.**

Photo Courtesy: S.S. Dash

Habitat : Found in deciduous forests and in fairly dense, seasonally dry scrubby woodlands in hilly areas of the Western Ghats from sea level to 1050 m.

Population status/Cause for RET : Vulnerable. Collected for its attractive fronds and roots and

seeds which are edible. The specific name refers to the circinate condition in young foliage. The plant looks more graceful as compared to *C. revoluta* Thunb.

Description : Trees ca 4(-8) m high; trunk cylindrical, rarely forked, with crown of pinnate leaves and compact woody bases of petioles; bark brown, with diamond shaped leaf scars, smooth below; petiole 0.4-0.6 m long, with short spines; leaflets 80-100 pairs, alternate, 15-30 × 0.7-1.2 cm, margins flat. Male cone ca 7.6 cm in diam., peduncle ca 35 cm long, microsporophyll 3.5 - 5 × 1.2-2 cm, ovate-deltoid, prolonged into an upcurved subulate spine, brown tomentose, glabrous above. Megasporophyll 15-20 cm long; blade 6-7 × 2.5 cm, rhomboid, crenate or spinous at margins, acuminate at tip; ovules 6-12. Seeds ovoid, ca 3.8 cm diam., pale reddish-yellow.

Fl. : February-March; *Fr.* : August - October.

Commercial/Ex-Im data : Cases of offence was registered against M/s Kenibreed Plants, Kalimpong, West Bengal for attempting to transport ca 9 kg of *C. circinalis* along with *Ensete ventricosum* (Welw.) Cheesman (= *Musa ensete* J.F. Gmel.) to New Zealand and 3.55 kg of *Cycas* seeds to UK on 04.04.2002 detected at FPO, Kolkata on 04.01.2001.

Legal : Listed in Appendix II of CITES.

Reference :

Jain, S.K. & A.R.K. Sastry (1983). An Assessment of Threatened Plants of India. P. 81.