



1. Habit of a mature plant in cultivation. 2. Woody stem and broad leaves with grooved stalks. 3. Close-up of small white flowers with yellow stamens. 4. Branched clusters of glossy red berries.



## Giant Palm-lily (*Cordyline manners-suttoniae*)

Introduced

Native

Not Declared

This plant from the swamps and rainforests of northern and central Queensland is widely grown in gardens in the sub-tropical regions of Australia. Also known as Swamp Palm-lily, it is beginning to invade forests and wetlands in south-eastern Queensland.

### Distribution

Giant Palm-lily is native to the coastal districts of northern and central Queensland, from Cape York south to about Rockhampton. While no herbarium records have been collected outside its native range, there have been several sightings of this plant becoming established in bushland in the Brisbane and Gold Coast areas in recent years. For example, since 2008, plants have been reported growing in the Boondall Wetlands, Coombabah Lake Nature Reserve and Coomera Waters Reserve and from bushland in Upper Kedron and Fig Tree Pocket.

This species is also often erroneously planted in revegetation and rehabilitation sites in south-eastern Queensland, after being mistaken for a native species.

### Description

A shrub with upright woody stems growing up to 5 m tall, but usually 2-4 m in height. Plants often grow with a single stem at first, but eventually produce numerous stems from the base of the plant. The large bright green leaves are crowded at the tips of the branches. These leaves have a broad leaf blade (35-65 cm long and 6-15 cm wide) but their bases are narrowed into a grooved stalk (12-30 cm long) that is U-shaped in cross-section.

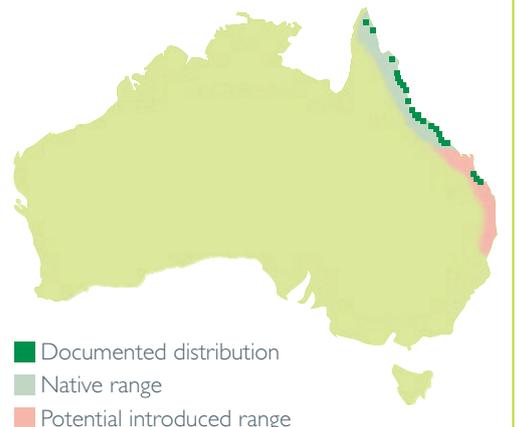
The small white flowers are loosely arranged in branched clusters up to 25 cm long, which are produced at the end of a stalk up to 35 cm long. Individual flowers have six 'petals' (10-12 mm long) and six yellow stamens, and are borne on small stalks 7-12 mm long. The small rounded fruit turn from green to bright red and then darker red as they mature. These fleshy fruit (10-15 mm across) contain several shiny black seeds.

### Quick Facts

- > An upright shrub with woody stems growing up to 5 m tall
- > Large green leaves borne on grooved stalks 12-30 cm long
- > Small white flowers arranged in large branched clusters.
- > Glossy red berries that are round and 10-15 mm across
- > The flowers and berries are borne on stalks 7-12 mm long

### Habitat

Within its native range, this species grows in rainforests and around swamps in other types of forest from near sea level up to 660 m altitude. It has been found growing in similar habitats in south-eastern Queensland.





1. Plant growing in a paperbark wetland on the Gold Coast. 2. Close-up of berries borne on obvious stalks.

## Reproduction and Dispersal

This species reproduces mainly by seeds, which are primarily dispersed by birds and other animals that eat the fruit. However, plants can also grow from pieces of stem and tuberous roots that are dumped in garden waste.

## Why is it an Emerging Threat?

Giant Palm-lily is very similar to several Palm Lilies that are native to the region and could replace them or other native plants that grow in the understorey of wetter forests and paperbark swamps. It is easily spread into nearby bushland areas by birds and, because it is quite common in cultivation in sub-tropical regions, there is a readily available source of seed for invasion.

## Control Methods

Plants can be manually removed with the aid of suitable tools, but care must be taken to remove the entire crown, including its tuberous root system. Material should be removed from site, as pieces of stem can take root and grow in wetter sites.

No herbicides are specifically registered for the control of Giant Palm-lily in Australia, but Vigilant Gel is registered for the control of woody weeds in native vegetation, conservation areas, gullies, reserves and parks (using the cut-stump method). Please read the label carefully and follow the instructions closely (e.g. avoid using near desirable plants and do not contaminate waterways, ponds or drains).

## Look a-likes

Giant Palm-lily is often confused with the native Broad-leaved Palm-lily (*Cordyline petiolaris*) and is also similar to commonly cultivated varieties of *Cordyline fruticosa*. However, the native Broad-leaved Palm-lily can be easily distinguished from Giant Palm-lily by its stalkless flowers and fruit. The commonly cultivated varieties of *Cordyline fruticosa* can also be distinguished by their variegated or reddish coloured leaves.



Top. Habit of Broad-leaved Palm-lily.

Bottom. Dense clusters of stalkless fruit.

The control methods referred to in Weed Watch™ should be used in accordance with the restrictions (federal and state legislation and local government laws) directly or indirectly related to each control method. These restrictions may prevent the utilisation of one or more of the methods referred to, depending on individual circumstances. While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of this information, Technigro does not invite reliance upon it, nor accept responsibility for any loss or damage caused by actions based on it.

This information has been developed with the assistance of **The IVM Group** and Dr Sheldon Navie. Photographs are also courtesy of Dr Sheldon Navie © Technigro Australia Pty Ltd 2014