

***Cocos nucifera* (Coconut tree)**

The coconut tree is a member of the palm tree family Arecaceae, that is widely cultivated in tropical and subtropical regions around the world.

CLASSIFICATIONS

Kingdom: Plantae

Order: Arecales

Family: Arecacea

Genus: *Cocos*

Species: *nucifera*

PHYSICAL CHARACTERS

Height: Coconut palms typically grow to a height of 20-30 meters (66-98 feet), though some can reach up to 30 meters (98 feet).



Trunk: The trunk is slender, erect, and can be slightly curved. It is covered with a smooth, grey bark that has prominent leaf scars.

Leaves: The leaves are large, pinnate (feather-like), and can reach lengths of up to 4-6 meters (13-20 feet). Each leaf is composed of numerous narrow leaflets arranged along a central rachis.

Flowers: The coconut palm produces both male and female flowers on the same inflorescence. The flowers are small, yellowish, and borne in large clusters called spadices, which emerge from the leaf axils.

Coconut: It has a hard outer shell and a fibrous husk.

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

It provides a wide range of products, including coconut oil, meat (copra), water, and coir, which are essential in cooking, cosmetics, industrial applications, and eco-friendly goods. These products generate significant export revenues for countries like the Philippines, Indonesia, and India, and create employment opportunities in farming, processing, and manufacturing industries. The growing global demand for natural and sustainable products has further boosted the coconut market, making it a cornerstone of economic stability and growth in many developing nations.

INTERESTING FACTS:

The name coconut comes from the old Portuguese and Spanish word ‘coco’ which means head or skull - the three grooves on the coconut shell are thought to resemble facial features.