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Chamaedorea microspadix: Microspadix Palm, Hardy Bamboo Palm[1]

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This Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ publication is part of a document series originally written by Edward F. Gilman. Visit https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/ to learn more about creating and maintaining attractive landscapes that protect Florida's water resources and environment.

Introduction

Microspadix palm is a clumping palm that has slender, bamboo-like stems that grow to 5 to 8 feet in height and 3 to 5 feet in spread (Figure 1). New stems continually arise from the base of the palm. These are smooth and pale green with feathery fronds borne 3 to 4 inches apart. The fronds have regularly spaced leaflets that are dull green in color with pointed tips (Figure 2). The terminal leaflets are 2 to 3 times wider than the others. Small yellow-green flowers are borne in panicles on female plants (Figure 3). The flowers are followed by small, showy, bright orange-red fruits (Figure 4). Microspadix palm is much more cold hardy than other related species, tolerating up to zone 8B. This plant is well suited for use as a specimen or accent, may be used as a screen or border, makes a dramatic mass planting, and may be grown as a houseplant.

Figure 1. Full form—*Chamaedorea microspadix*: microspadix palm.
Credit: Ryan Fessenden

Figure 2. Leaf—*Chamaedorea microspadix*: microspadix palm.
Credit: Ryan Fessenden

Figure 3. Flower—*Chamaedorea microspadix*: microspadix palm.
Credit: Ryan Fessenden

Figure 4. Fruit—*Chamaedorea microspadix*: microspadix palm.
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General Information

Scientific name: *Chamaedorea microspadix*

Pronunciation: kam-ee-DOR-ee-uh mye-kroe-SPAY-dicks

Common name(s): microspadix palm, hardy bamboo palm

Family: *Arecaceae*

Plant type: palm

USDA hardiness zones: 8B through 11B (Figures 5 and 6)

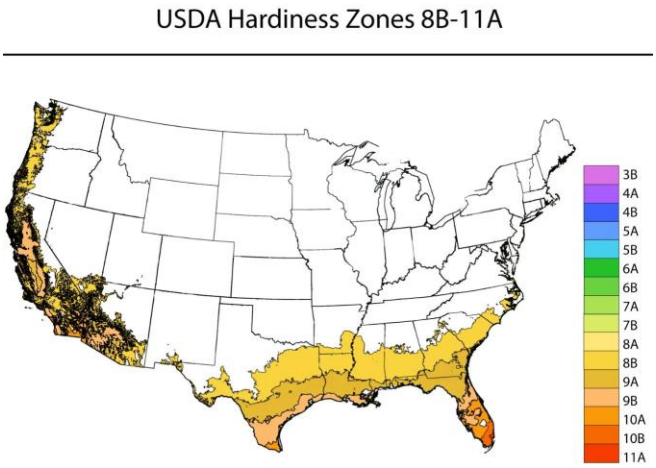

Figure 5. Shaded area represents potential planting zone—USDA Hardiness Zones 8B–11A; 11B within growing zone but not pictured on map.
Credit: This map is based on the 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. Visit https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/ for specific zone information.

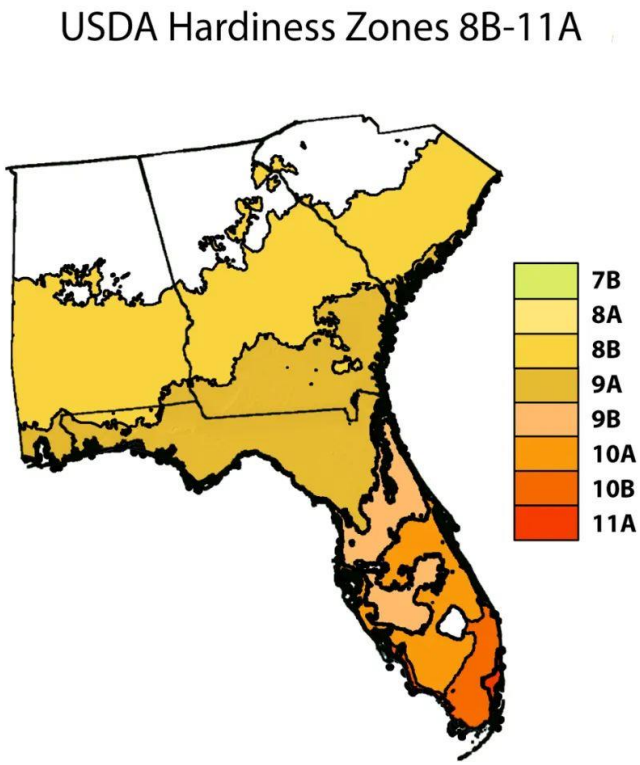

Figure 6. Shaded area represents potential planting zone in the SE Region—USDA Hardiness Zones 8B–11A; 11B within growing zone but not pictured on map.
Credit: This map is based on the 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. Visit https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/ for specific zone information.

Planting month for zone 8: Mar. to Nov.

Planting month for zone 9: year-round

Planting month for zones 10 and 11: year-round

Origin: not native to North America; native to Mexico

Uses: specimen; screen; border; accent; mass planting; suitable for growing indoors

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: 5 to 8 feet

Spread: 3 to 5 feet

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: slow

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: spiral

Leaf type: even-pinnately compound

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: lanceolate

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow

Flower characteristic: flowers periodically throughout the year; inconspicuous; dioecious

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: less than 0.5 inch

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: red

Fruit characteristic: persists on the plant; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; showy

Current year stem/twig color: green

Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in the shade

Soil tolerances: acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Winter interest: evergreen foliage

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

This excellent garden palm tolerates high shade. Plants can be acclimated to a partially sunny location with gradual exposure. The microspadix palm will do well in a partially to fully shaded location in the landscape. It is tolerant of short periods of drought and will be suited to most well-drained soils. Regular irrigation also appears to encourage continued growth. Microspadix palm is adaptable to soil conditions, given that it is well drained. Plants receiving regular fertilizer applications appear much greener and more attractive than those without fertilizer.

The microspadix palm makes a great border or specimen plant and is quite striking when planted en masse. It is also a wonderful container plant for outdoor or indoor decoration. It can be grown inside in a bright location. Old fronds turn brown and hang on the plant and can be removed for a cleaner appearance.

Design Considerations

Microspadix palm provides a lush tropical feel with medium green foliage and a slender, clumping, bamboo-like form that provides fine texture and gentle vertical structure in shaded plantings. Its airy habit makes it well suited as a specimen in courtyards or patios, a foundation plant on protected north or east facing exposures, a light screening element along walkways, or a mid-layer accent beneath open tree canopies; it also performs reliably in containers. Pair with shade-loving companions like ferns, caladiums (*Caladium bicolor* and hybrids), and impatiens (*Impatiens* spp. except *I. walleriana*) for seasonal color; combine with other tropical structural plants such as bird

of paradise (*Strelitzia reginae*), gingers (various species), and bromeliads (*Aechmea* spp., *Billbergia* spp., *Guzmania* spp); use groundcovers like cast iron plant (*Aspidistra elatior)* or mondo grass (*Ophiopogon japonicus*) beneath, and complement with flowering shrubs like firebush (*Hamelia patens*) or natal plum (*Carissa macrocarpa*) to create a lush, layered tropical garden.

Pests and Diseases

No pest or disease issues of major concern.

[1] This document is FPS121, one of a series of the UF/IFAS Department of Environmental Horticulture. Original publication date October 1999. Revised October 2026. Visit the Ask IFAS website at https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu for the currently supported version of this publication. © 2026 UF/IFAS. This publication is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

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