

## pachira



PACHIRA AQUATICA

### BOTANICAL NAME

*Pachira aquatica*

(pak-EYE-ra)

### COMMON NAMES

Provision tree, Money tree, Guiana chestnut, Water chestnut, Wild cocoa tree, Shaving-brush tree

### DESCRIPTION

*Pachiras* are evergreen trees that feature large leaves, which can grow up to 12 inches across, with five to nine lance-shaped leaflets. As full-sized trees, *Pachiras* live in boggy, tropical environments. They are being sold in their smaller incarnations as houseplants and even bonsai trees. Sometimes the trunks of several *Pachiras* are trained around one another in a braided fashion. Other times, *P. aquatica* is sold as a cane cutting with just a crown of leaves. Indoors, these trees do not flower.

### DECORATIVE LIFE

With proper care, *Pachiras* can live indoors for years.

### AVAILABILITY

*Pachiras* are available year-round.

### in-store and consumer care

**WATER** Keep the soil moderately moist at all times in spring through fall. In winter, water the plants more sparingly.

**LIGHT** Bright indoor light is best, but keep *Pachiras* out of direct sunlight.

**TEMPERATURE** Average warm indoor temperatures are appropriate. In winter, *Pachiras* should be kept cooler, though not at temperatures lower than 45 F.

**HUMIDITY** *Pachiras* require sufficient humidity; mist leaves as necessary.

**FERTILIZER** Feed *Pachiras* every several weeks, less during winter.

**PROPAGATION** Stem pieces from *Pachiras* can be used as cane cuttings.



P. AQUATICA



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### challenges

**PESTS AND PROBLEMS** Don't overwater the plant or allow excess water to collect; this can lead to leaf yellowing.

**LEAF PROBLEMS** Low humidity will cause *Pachiras*' leaves to drop.

**PRUNING** The leaves can be trimmed to control the plant's shape.

### family tree

**FAMILY** *Pachiras* are a relative of the baobab tree (*Adansonia digitata*), and both are members of the *Bombacaceae* family.

**HOME SWEET HOME** *Pachiras* are native to the wetlands of Mexico, Ecuador and Brazil.

**WHAT'S IN A NAME** The word *Pachira* comes from the native Guyanese word for these trees. Its species name, *aquatica*, comes from the fact that the *Pachira*'s trunk, like the baobab's, stores water. For a time, *P. aquatica* was classified as *P. macrocarpa*.

### fun facts

**LUCKY PLANT?** Often sold for indoor use under the common name "money tree," *Pachiras* are among plants important in feng shui. The five-fingered leaves represent the five feng-shui elements: wood, water, earth, fire and metal.

The trees are believed to bring wealth, and the braiding of the trunks is symbolic of catching and retaining this wealth. In some countries, coins are placed on the plant's trunk to enhance these qualities. The plant's symbolism makes it an appropriate gift for weddings and new businesses.

**IN THE WILD** In their outdoor, full-size form, *Pachiras* can grow to 60 feet tall. The trees flower with greenish or cream flowers that have multiple red-tipped stamens resembling long brushes.

**EDIBLE TREATS** After flowering, football-shaped pods are produced that can grow to 12 inches long and 5 inches in diameter. These pods are packed with nuts (hence the chestnut-related common names). The edible nuts can be eaten raw, roasted or fried or can be ground into flour for baking. **sfr**

Some information provided by:

Botanica by R.G. Turner Jr. and Ernie Wasson  
Dave's Garden, <http://davesgarden.com/nl.php?date=2003-06-07>

Floridata.com, [www.floridata.com/ref/p/pach\\_aqu.cfm](http://www.floridata.com/ref/p/pach_aqu.cfm)  
The Greek Flowers Portal, [www.valentine.gr/pachira\\_en.htm](http://www.valentine.gr/pachira_en.htm)  
Hortus Third by Liberty Hyde Bailey and Ethel Zoe Bailey  
The Houseplant Encyclopedia by Ingrid Jantra and Ursula Krüger

The House Plant Expert Book Two by Dr. D.G. Hessayon  
Stearn's Dictionary of Plant Names by William T. Stearn

Reach Foliage Plant of the Month writer Amy Bauer at [abauer@superfloralretailing.com](mailto:abauer@superfloralretailing.com) or (800) 355-8086.

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