VESS
VANUATU ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE SOCIETY

Threatened Species Factsheet No. 23

# BANGULU PALM

## What are they called?

**Scientific**: *Carpoxylon macrospermum*
**English**: Bangulu Palm
**French**: Palmier Gulu
**Bislama**:
**Vernacular**: Nohoej (Aneityum)

## A little bit about them:

Bangulu are in the palm family and are endemic to Tanna, Futuna and Aneityum, but have been introduced to many other islands of Vanuatu. These palms grow in lowland forested areas but cultivated trees have adapted to more open conditions. They prefer volcanic and coastal soils.

## What do they look like?

*Carboxylon* palms can exceed 25m in height with a swollen trunk at the base. A crownshaft (sheath) separates the trunk from the leaves. There are about 12 leaves, each 3-4m in length and arch over with pointy leaflets.

Source: Ramon L. & Sam C., 2015. *Remarkable plants of Vanuatu*.

Flowers are white and hang in a bunch from base of crownshaft. It has distinctive large red fruit around 6cm long and oval shaped with a hard inner shell.

## Did you know?

- This is the only tree in the *Carpoxylon* group and is found nowhere else in the world.
- The species was once thought to be extinct and an expedition in 1987 found only 40 individuals in the wild.

This tree is classified as Critically Endangered (CR) on the IUCN Red List.

### Why are they threatened?

- The small remaining population is at risk from land clearing for development and agriculture.
- Additional stresses such as natural disasters or rapid environmental change may cause major damage to the wild population as there are so few individuals left.

## What do they do for us?

- Flying foxes and coconut crabs eat Bangulu palm fruit.
- They are ornamental palms and planted in gardens. For example there is a row planted outside parliament house in Port Vila.
- As with other palms, the trunks can be used for housing materials, and their leaves for thatch roofing and brooms.

## What can we do for them?

- ✓ Plant more palms from seedlings distributed by Department of Forests.
- ✓ Establish Community Conservation Areas that nationally protect *Carpoxylon's* natural habitat
- ✓ Use non-threatened palm's timber and leaves for building materials etc.

Source: VESS 2017

### Want to know more?

- ❖ Visit: www.iucnredlist.org
- ❖ Contact Vanuatu's Department of Forests.
- ❖ Ramon L. & Sam C., 2015

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