

# Calamus laoensis

18

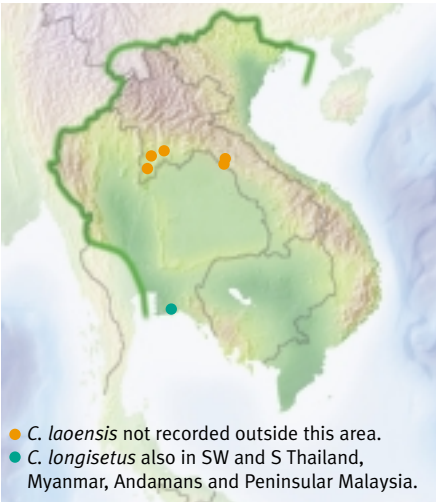
(wai leum, wai katok, wai wa, wai keyomee)

**Climbing Clustering Flagellum Knee present, indistinct**

A large, newly discovered species only known from central Lao.

## Look for:

- Robust habit, the leaf sheath covered in many long flat spines, pale with dark tips.
- Leaflets in groups of 2–5 on each side of the rachis, pointing in all directions.
- Leaflets with white indumentum underneath.



- *C. laoensis* not recorded outside this area.
- *C. longisetus* also in SW and S Thailand, Myanmar, Andamans and Peninsular Malaysia.

## Habitat

In Lao grows in evergreen forest, including forest near karst, at 200–350 m.

## Fruiting and flowering months

Flowers in bud 5.

Fruit appears nearly ripe 5. May take  $\geq 1$  year to ripen.

## Uses

Handicrafts: suitable.

Trade: not preferred, but can be sold.

Shoot: edible (some say it is too bitter to eat).

Leaves can be used as thatch.

## Planting

None known in Lao. May have good potential.

## Stem

Stem up to 40 m long and 2–2.5 cm diameter.

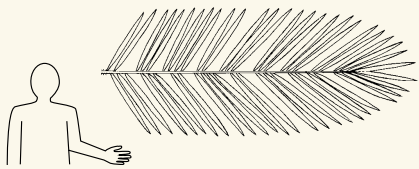
Sheath 3.5–5 cm diameter.

Sheath light green-grey or pale yellow green.

Spines very many. Some long and flat (up to 6 cm), greeny-yellow bases, pale straw colour with dark tips. Also many tiny black needles.

Ocrea small, formed by the brittle margin of the sheath, covered with spines like the sheath.





**Whole leaf** 1.7–2.5 m long.

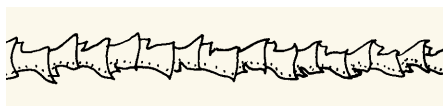
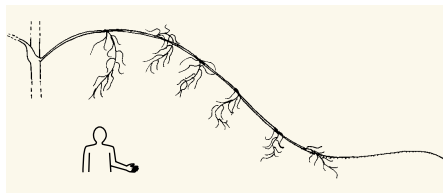
Petiole on upper leaves 5–10 cm long (up to 40 cm on some middle leaves).

Largest leaflets 35–65 cm × 3.2–4 cm.

Underside of leaflets with white indumentum, although this may have washed off on old leaves. One mid-vein prominent, naked on both surfaces. Margins bristly. More strongly grouped on lower leaves.

**Inflorescence** 2.5–6 m long plus flagellum. Branches pendulous.

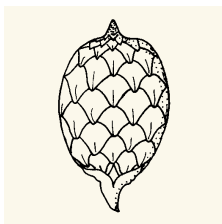
Primary bracts splitting at mouth, tightly sheathing.



♂ usually 3–4-branched. Rachilla bracts up to 4 mm wide.



♀ usually 2-branched. Rachilla bracts up to 6 mm wide.



### Fruit

2.0 cm when nearly ripe

1.2 cm wide

Scales orange when dry with dark brown submarginal band, deeply channelled.

Seed not ruminant.

### Compare:

- *C. flagellum* (19), *C. rudentum* (20): leaflets regularly spaced, not white below.

- **18a *Calamus longisetus***

Leaflets grouped but not white below and have long black bristles on central vein. Rachilla bracts 9–12 mm wide in both sexes. Fruit 3.0 × 2.0 cm, unchannelled and with beautiful black, brown and cream stripes. Cultivated in South Thailand.