

Calamus flagellum

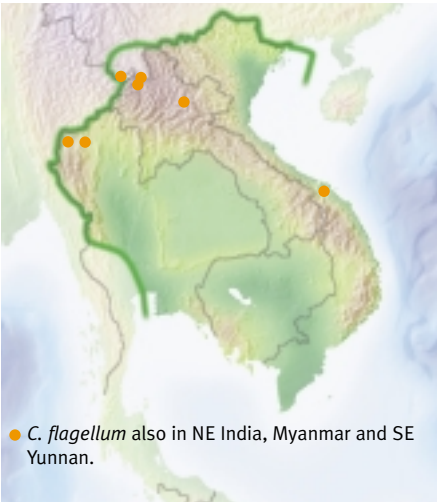
19

(wai lao, wai mon, wai namleuang, wai thoon, blong poul, probably also wai khanyai, wai long)

Climbing Clustering Flagellum Knee present, indistinct

Look for:

- Robust habit, the leaf sheath covered in many long flat spines, pale with dark tips.
- Leaflets long, regularly arranged.
- Newly emerged leaf sheaths with a pair of bristly 'ears' which soon fall off.



Habitat

In Lao grows in evergreen forest, sometimes on karst, at 800–950 m. Recorded at 1350 m in Vietnam and 1400–1500 m in Thailand.

Fruiting and flowering months

Flowers in bud 5 (Lao), 1 (Vietnam). Open 5 (Thailand).
Fruit ripe, 6 (Thailand). May take ≥ 1 year to ripen.

Uses

Handicrafts: suitable.

Trade: suitable? (in India, brittle and useless).

Shoot: edible.

Planting

None known in Lao.



Stem

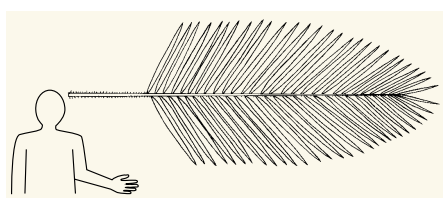
Stem 30 m long or more, and 1.5–3 cm diameter.

Sheath 2.5–5 cm diameter.

Sheath greenish-yellow with reddish or brown indumentum amongst spines.

Spines very many. Some long and flat (up to 6 cm), pale straw colour with extensive dark tips. Also many tiny black needles mixed in.

Ocrea over 5 cm, covered in bristles, in the form of an 'ear' each side of the sheath mouth. Visible on the newest sheaths but falls off quite quickly.



Whole leaf 2–2.5 m long.

Petiole of upper leaves 30–70 cm long.

Largest leaflets 60–70 cm × 3.5–4.5 cm.

Mid veins prominent and bearing one line of long or short black bristles on each surface. Margins bristly. The variety *furvifuraceus* has dark indumentum on the sheath, petiole and rachis and some lower leaflets grouped.



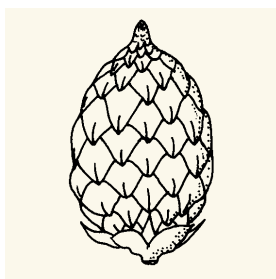
Inflorescence 4–6 m long plus flagellum. Branches pendulous.

Primary bracts lacerate at the mouth, slightly inflated.



♂ usually 3-branched. Flowers 4.5–6 (rarely 12) mm apart in each row, rachilla bracts 4–5 (rarely 9) mm wide, flowers 8–9 mm long.

♀ usually 2-branched. Flowers usually 15 mm apart in each row, rachilla bracts 7–8 mm wide, flowers 10 mm long.



Fruit

2.7–3.0 cm long

1.8 cm wide

Big, with channelled scales. Orange-brown when dry.

Seed ruminant.

Compare:

- *C. rudentum* (20): has the leaf sheath almost open on one side, no 'ears', a comb of long petiole spines embracing the stem, thinner rachillae and smaller yellow fruit with the seed not ruminant.
- *C. laoensis* (18): has no 'ears' and grouped leaflets which are white underneath.
- *C. rhabdocladus* (21): has interruptedly pinnate leaflets rarely bigger than 40 × 2 cm, no 'ears' and short male rachillae.
- *C. erectus* (3): has 'ears', but is erect with no climbing organ and rings of yellow spines around the petiole.