



# Caring for Palms

Palms are extremely beautiful, functional and versatile and there is a variety that will thrive in every situation.

They are easy to grow, and with just a little care, will adorn your home and garden with their beauty for many years.

It is important to continue watering your palms every day while they are in the pots waiting to be transplanted or re-potted, as they are accustomed to being watered everyday while in the nursery.

## **INDOOR PALMS**

Your home is not complete without some beautiful potted palms, with their classic look of timeless beauty.

- **LIGHT** - Most Indoor varieties prefer indirect or filtered sunlight, although morning sunlight is usually acceptable. Position your palms away from windows, as glass tends to transmit heat and magnify light, which can cause rapid drying out, and sometimes leaf burn. Low light situations needn't be a problem, as there are varieties that don't mind such a position. These include Parlour, Kentia, Rhapsis, Wedding and Dwarf Date Palms.
- **WATER** - Water requirements can vary depending on light intensity, temperature and humidity, but a good guideline is, "If the potting mix feels dry, it needs watering." Throughout the summer, most palms will need watering every day, whereas in winter, once a week may be sufficient. In fact, over watering in winter may cause the tips of the fronds to go brown. Adding a liquid fertilizer to your water once a fortnight will help maintain good growth and a healthy sheen.
- **HUMIDITY** - Palms thrive in warm, humid conditions, but can lose their luster in a dry, air-conditioned atmosphere, or if positioned near a fireplace or heater. You can increase humidity by misting the fronds regularly, especially throughout the warmer months. Standing the pot on a large saucer filled with evaporative material such as wet sand, pebbles or gravel also helps to improve humidity, however do not stand your palm in a saucer of water.
- **RE –POTTING** - palms only require re-potting when they become 'pot bound' i.e. their roots have completely filled the existing pot and are appearing through the pot-holes at the bottom. The best time to re-pot is during an active growth cycle in pre spring or in summer. When re-potting, do not "over-pot." For example, pot a 150mm into a 200mm pot, a 200mm into a 250mm pot or 300mm. Always use a reputable potting mix and incorporate slow-release fertilizer at the rate recommended. Be careful not to disturb the roots or allow them to dry out during potting, and thoroughly saturate after completion
- **CLEANING** - palms fronds can collect dust and grime, so they need to be cleaned periodically. This can be done by gently sponging the leaves with a weak solution or mild detergent in like warm water. This should then be sponged off with clean water.





## PALMS IN POTS OUTDOORS

Palms make marvelous tub-plants that will greatly enhance your verandah, Patio, paved terrace, courtyard, barbeque and swimming pool areas.

Use a reputable potting mix and incorporate a slow release fertilizer, water crystals could be also added, as they absorb many times their own weight in water and prevent the mix from drying out so fast.

Applying surface mulches such as granulated bark or peat moss also helps to retain moisture and keep the fine roots beneath the surface moist and cool.

A thorough watering 3 times a week is essential in warm, sunny or windy weather. In winter, twice a week may be sufficient. Remember it will still be necessary to water your potted palms after light rain, as it does not penetrate very deeply into the potting soil. Hosing down the palm fronds regularly is helpful because it removes the build-up of dust and discourages pests.

Applying a liquid fertilizer on a fortnightly basis is highly beneficial and will keep your palm looking at their handsome best.

Every one or two years it is advisable to re-pot your container grown palms, using fresh potting mix. Firstly it is a good idea to soak the pot by immersion until all bubbles cease, for maximum uptake of water. Remove the pot prior to planting.

Always dig a hole twice as wide and twice as deep as the pot.

It can be beneficial to add a commercial garden soil along with a handful of slow release fertilizer and mix into the soil both at the bottom of the hole and when filling in around the sides.

The soil and/or planting mix should be firmed but not compacted after planting to remove air pockets, and thoroughly saturate with water.

When planting into heavy clay or hard shale type soils, it is not advisable to dig a hole into the ground, as it will merely act as a slow draining water-well, restricting the root growth and possibly causing root-rot.

It is much better to plant your palms into a raised bed filled with a reputable topsoil or planting mix. It should be constructed deep enough to accommodate the root system of your palms.

Another method when planting into heavy clay or shale is to remove the pot and stand the palm on the surface of the bare earth. Gradually build up a large mound of topsoil and/or planting mix over and around the root system, adding a slow-release fertilizer during the process. The mound should be firm and have a slight crater-like effect on top sloping in toward the trunk, to conserve moisture and prevent erosion. The sides should slope away gently to the ground level.

- **MULCHING** - Mulching the soil surface around the palm is a good idea as it keeps the surface roots moist and cool, helps prevent erosion and drying out, and deters weed growth.
  - **FEEDING** - Regular feeding can help to maintain a healthy attractive appearance and ensure steady growth. Apply a slow release fertilizer in Spring and again in early Autumn. Liquid feed can also be applied fortnightly throughout the summer.
  - **WATERING** - Give your palms a thorough soaking after planting, and water every second day there after. As they become established, watering can gradually be reduced to twice weekly, and eventually a good soaking once a week. As well as watering the soil around the base of your palm, it is highly beneficial to give the central growing crown a good soaking as well.
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