



## Palms & Cycads Care & Maintenance

### Watering

Water the palm deeply and thoroughly immediately after planting. The root ball and surrounding backfill should remain evenly moist, but never saturated during the first four to six months after installation. A slight berm can be mounded up around the edge of the root ball to retain water during irrigation. Supplemental irrigation is necessary unless adequate rainfall is received during this period. Remember that it is important to have good drainage and not to overwater. Most established palms and cycads require water during the summer, which is the period of their active growth. Apply mulch around the trunk, keeping a small circle (several inches) around the trunk free of mulch. Mulching helps to conserve moisture and reduce weeds.

### Fertilizing

Palms may fail to thrive without a regular, balanced fertilization program. Mature palms in the landscape should optimally receive a granular fertilizer formulated for palms ("palm special ") that contains additional magnesium and a complete micronutrient amendment. Nitrogen and potassium rates should be equivalent and all or at least some of the elements should be available in a slow-release form. These "palm specials " are especially recommended for palms growing on the outer coastal plain where micronutrient deficiencies are common. Other trees and shrubs sharing soil with palms would also benefit from this fertilizer.

### Pruning Palms

As indicated in many deficiencies, the damaged foliage may not recover, but the new growth in the bud should demonstrate good health if this fertility program is maintained. If a palm is deficient in nutrients K and Mg, removing unattractive lower leaves of deficient palms will cause the potassium (K) deficiency symptoms to move up to the next tier of leaves, making the problem worse. Only remove completely dead and loose leaves, badly damaged or diseased leaves and fruit, and flower stalks when pruning a palm. If the petiole (the base of the leaf stem or stalk) is green, the leaf is not dead. Never remove leaves at an angle above the horizontal (9:00 & 3:00). This will give the palm a "lion's tail" appearance. There is also evidence that over-trimming makes the palm more susceptible to cold damage. Cut leaf bases close, but not into the trunk. Do not attempt to tear off leaves. This causes wounds that can lead to disease or insect infestation.



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### Care of the Bud & Fronds

The greatest loss of water in newly dug palms occurs from transpiration through the leaves. Minimize this problem by removing one-half or more of the older leaves at the time of digging. Tie the remaining leaves together in a bundle around the bud with biodegradable twine.

### Winter Care

When cold weather is predicted, it is time to protect an outdoor palm. Before the sun sets, cover the palm with a heavy frost blanket made for horticultural use, or cover it with a regular blanket or sheet. Hold the fabric off the palm's leaves by using stakes or other supports. Unfortunately, no good way exists to protect a tall palm tree's terminal head of fronds from cold weather. Wrapping a palm's trunk with burlap is an additional protection measure, however. The blanket or sheet should be removed the next day, after the cold weather passes, but the burlap can remain on the tree for several days or longer. Unwrap the trunk, though, for periods of warm weather.

### \*\* Problems \*\*

- Nutritional: Palms are very susceptible to nutrient deficiencies of nitrogen, potassium, magnesium, and manganese. Symptoms include yellowing, streaking, or even spotting of the fronds. Following a regular, balanced fertilization program for palms is important, especially in the sandy regions such as the Outer Coastal Plain, where micronutrient deficiencies typically occur.
- Insects and Diseases: Diseases that may affect palms and cycads include fungal leaf spots and root rots. Common insects that affect palms include spider mites, palm leaf skeletonizers, and scale insects. Scale insects and mealybugs commonly attack cycads.

**\*Palm Trees planted in South Carolina have a 70% survival rate\***

**\*\*Customer is responsible for proper watering and care of plants\*\***

**\*\* TREES, SHRUBBERY, GRASS, AND/OR ANY KIND OF LANDSCAPING IS NOT COVERED IN YOUR YEAR WARRANTY WITH BEVERLY HOMES \*\***