

Palm Trees are very rugged and hearty plants. They add beauty and character to any landscape and demand little in return. If your palm trees are the right species for your particular zone, then once established they will need very little maintenance. To cultivate beautiful, healthy palms you only need to follow a few simple steps. Water, prune and fertilize. In colder climates add winterizing to that list.

Watering

Palms love water and grow faster when they are sufficiently irrigated. However, most palms are also very drought tolerant and can survive a dry season fairly easily. Watering your palms is especially important right after planting. This is when they are at their weakest and need constant water and nourishment to establish themselves. New palm trees should be watered once a day.

The amount of water depends on the size of the tree but a good rule of thumb is to use 10 gallons per watering for a plant that came in a 10 gallon container, 25 gallons for a plant that came in or would fit in a 25 gallon container and so on. See our WATERING GUIDE for more details

The soil around the tree should always be a little moist. On installation, we build a bowl out of soil around the tree and fill it up with water. That way we know we have watered enough and we also save water since all the water stays close to the tree.

Pruning

Keeping your palms pruned and trimmed will add to the beauty of the tree and for some species it will help keep the tree healthy and growing as it should. Knowing when and when not to prune is important. Palm tree fronds that are dead or broken and hang down should be pruned. Fronds that are only partially yellow or brown and are not broken should be left alone. The reason for this is that the tree draws nutrients from the dying fronds. When they hang down that is a good indication that they have served their purpose and are ready to prune.

Over pruning will make your tree more susceptible to drought, disease and low temperatures. Also, you can prune fruit off of any palm if you wish. This leaves the nutrients for the fronds.

Fertilizing

Simply fertilize three times a year with a 3 month slow release palm fertilizer designed for palms. After applying the fertilizer simply water it in.

For the initial fertilization, blend in fertilizer at the time of planting to enrich the soil removed from the hole. Mix at a rate of two ounces of palm fertilizer per inch of trunk diameter. After planting and watering in the tree you can add one additional ounce of slow release palm fertilizer per three inches of trunk on the ground. This will give the tree a good start.

After the tree is established you will use a different ratio for fertilizing. We recommend a palm fertilizer in the form of slow release pellets that contains roughly 12 to 13 percent nitrogen, 3 to 4 percent potassium, 12 to 13 percent phosphorus plus trace elements.

Winterizing

Cold weather can damage or kill a palm but keeping the temperature above the trees minimum temperature level will prevent this. To keep a small palm warm you can simply place a box over it or cover it with straw. This is normally sufficient. If you want to add some artificial warmth to the inside of the box you can integrate some christmas lights.

To keep a large tree warm, most people wrap the tree in burlap, bubble wrap or another material that will hold in warmth but not soak up water. After wrapping the tree you can take lights and wrap the tree up the trunk up to the major fronds. This will help keep the core temperature of the trunk from freezing. As mentioned before, it is not a good idea to heavily prune a tree right before the cold season. Healthy full trees have a better chance of surviving the cold.