



Pacific Northwest Palm & Exotic Plant Society

10310 Hollybank Drive, Richmond BC V7E 4S5

www.hardypalm.com

Palm Planting & Maintenance

Planting (Windmill Palm):

Location: Sunny to semi-sunny location on a gentle slope is ideal.

- Radius of mature palm fronds from trunk is about 6 feet (2m) so do not plant close to a wall, or each other if in a group. Minimum group spacing can be slightly reduced if palms are at different heights.
- Palms are strongly geotropic but not phototropic. That means they grow straight up, but not toward light.
- Once trunked, palms grow at about 1 ft (0.3m)/year.

Soil and site preparation:

- Soil should be well draining, particularly critical if for a dry land species such as *Chamaerops* or *Butia*. Test by filling 16 inch deep hole with water. If more than 12 hours needed to drain, drainage is too poor.
- Hole should be about 6 inches wider than the ball or pot in all dimensions. If burlapped, the burlap should be removed since the roots will not penetrate it. Roots are brittle so should be disturbed as little as possible.

Watering:

- Keep roots well watered when establishing the new root structure of a recently planted palm, usually for at least the first year.
- Subsequent water requirements are based on species. Windmill palms (*Trachycarpus fortunei*) should have regular water during summer droughts.

Fertilizer:

- Container palms can use regular tropical plant fertilizer

- Planted palms can use tropical plant fertilizer, but do better with a yearly feeding of a special fertilizer blend (often called palm fertilizer):
8N–0.9P–10K–4Mg plus 2% Mn and Fe and trace amounts of Zn, Cu, and B

Note the low P with supplemental Mg and Mn, and Fe. General purpose fertilizers can actually exacerbate nutritional deficiencies.

- Palm fertilizer stakes or other compositions are available
- No really good organic alternatives, although you can concoct your own from borax, epsom salts, etc.

Pruning:

- Do not remove fronds unless the petioles are **horizontal or lower** (see line in photo below). Severe pruning weakens the palm and may reduce trunk diameter.



- Prune petioles evenly, as close to the trunk as possible to avoid unsightly snaggy looking ends.
- Prune off flower stalks/seeds after their first year. Seeds are viable if male and female plants are in the same vicinity.