

Palms for Landscaping in South Texas – Part 2 of 2

Professional landscapers, homeowners and commercial property owners are planting more and more palm trees in their landscapes. Why? Because they are attractive plants that give a tropical image to your landscape as well as providing: windbreaks, obstructing an unsightly view, accentuating your pond or pool, and giving some shade in small or narrow spaces. Last week the **Texas Sabal**, **Chinese Fan** and **Mediterranean Fan palms** were featured. This week in lieu of the article on Ponds the second part of this palm series features **Cocus plumosus**, **Sago**, and both the **California** and **Mexican Washingtonian Fan palms**. Next week's article will discuss palm tree planting and care.

Insert picture here

Queen Palm or *Cocus plumosus*

Queen Palm or *Cocus plumosus*. This palm is a good accent tree providing a very tropical look with fast growth to 20 feet. The fronds are long, arching, and feather-like. The trunk is smooth, greenish in color with horizontal rings along the length of the trunk. This palm is cold tolerant to 28 degrees F and therefore the least cold tolerant of the recommended palms. Queen palm is especially susceptible to iron chlorosis or leaf yellowing. Fertilizing with magnesium sulfate three times a year when watering will eliminate leaf yellowing in new growth.

Insert picture here

Sago Palm

Sago Palm (*Cycas revoluta*). This plant is truly not a palm but a cycad, but is commonly referred to as a palm. This plant will grow to 6-feet but usually is half that. Sago palm is the shortest of the palms recommend for Valley landscapes. It produces 'off-shoots' or 'pups' and therefore will give a clustering or clump effect. It has 2- to 3-foot long, narrow, feathery fronds which grow upright, from a rounded open center, then produces a flat canopy. Flowering occurs in the summer. The female plant produces large, attractive, orange-red fruit clusters in the center of the canopy in the fall. It is cold tolerant to 25 degrees F. This palm is a good landscape plant and an ideal low growing accent plant.

Insert picture here
Mexican Fan Palm

Insert picture here
California Fan Palm

Washingtonian Fan Palms. There are two species of Washingtonian fan palms the California or *Washingtonian filifera* and the Mexican or *Washingtonian robusta*. The Mexican fan is the taller of the two and is the most common and the tallest growing palm in the Valley. The Mexican fan palm is very fast growing to 80-feet. It has large fan-shaped fronds producing a 6- to 8-foot wide, rounded, dense crown. It tolerates full sun, some shade and drought conditions, and has a relatively slender trunk. It is cold tolerant to 22 degrees F. The California fan palm is similar, but is medium fast growing to 60-feet, the trunk is 6- to 8-inches wider in diameter and is cold tolerant to 15 degrees F. Both palms have excessively sharp hooks along both side of the leaf stalk. Flowering occurs in late spring, with white, fragrant, blooms appearing on 7- to 8-foot long drooping stalks originating from the center of the crown. The seeds are dull-black berries. These two palms easily hybridize therefore, obtain a true species from a Valley Certified Nurseryman.

(Information source: Bulletin of the Palm Society of South Texas, 10 Nassau Dr. Rockport, TX. 78382 and *Palms of the World*, 1992, Blombery & Rodd eds., HarperCollins Pub.)

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