

10 Important Things to Know When Growing Palm Trees

By Grant Stephenson

*International Palm Society (www.Palms.org)
Horticultural Consultants Inc. Board*

- * **Cold Tolerance** - choose a palm tree that will live through our zone 9A winter (typically lows of 20-25 degrees).
- * **Plant Location** - choose a planting location that will accommodate the tree when it matures to its full grown size. This especially can be a problem if planted too close to power lines or a home.
- * **Light Requirements** - select the right genus and species for the light requirements available at the chosen planting location. For example, many palms that are understory in forests will not live in full sun.
- * **Soil Conditions** - research where the plant grows naturally and what type of soil and temperature conditions it thrives in. If it is heavy clay, plant the tree high. If it is sandy or loamy, plant the tree slightly above grade. Never plant too deep and provide drainage if necessary. Palms from the South will tolerate wetter soil and humidity, palms from the desert will require planting higher for better drainage.
- * **Watering** - Water new plantings weekly during their first year and in summer dry conditions. Be careful not to overwater as it displaces the oxygen holding capacity and will cause the root system to suffocate and weaken.
- * **Safety** - take care in pruning palm trees with thorns - wear protective eye glasses, long sleeved shirt, and gloves.



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- * **Preventing Disease** - when pruning always sterilize everything that comes in contact with the tree and root system in any way.
- * **Root Stabilization** - secure the tree when first transplanted so the adventitious root structure can reestablish without being traumatized by heavy wind.
- * **Nature is Best** - nature does everything better than Man. Feed the natural biology with compost specific teas and organic compost.
- * **Most Importantly** - sit back and watch your palm tree grow as you will learn its natural character and you will be better able to provide for its best needs.

The Houston Area Chapter of the International Palm Society will hold an open-to-the-public meeting Sat., Oct. 25, 2pm, at the Burhans home, 5607 Sanford Road. Bill and Kelley Burhans created a palm garden at nearby Meyer Library. Following the 2pm gathering will be a tour of the library palm garden 5005 West Bellfort. Details: Paul Norris, poollovers@comcast.net