

PALM TREES HELP THAT TROPICAL LOOK BUT BE AWARE OF THEIR GROWING HABITS

For that lush, tropical look in your garden, nothing is more suitable than palm trees. In your attempt to create a tropical landscape, pay attention to the details of what you are trying to create and what you already have in that space. Palms make your focal point, often the largest plants in your garden. Before you choose your palms remember that they should remain in scale within the landscape and its relation to your residence.

Frame your house or a section of your yard with tall, slender *Carpenteria Acuminata*. Add weight to your landscape and have eye-level palms like Bottle Palms. Enhance your courtyard with the paper-like chartreuse leaves of a *Licuala Grandis*.

When you put together your plan you will also want to assess what you already have in your space. Often you may have "volunteers", palm seedlings that just sprout on your property thanks to Mother Nature. When young, they are hardly noticeable until they reach 4' - 6' tall. Often they are in a spot that with time will be out of place, growing into power lines or too close to your house. One must learn to identify them to avoid the costs of removing them in the future.

If you choose to use palms, do your homework. Many species of palms develop a wide crown of fronds in their early years only to shoot up when they are truly mature. Remember what looks attractive at a local nursery can be disastrous in your yard several years later. An "Areca" for the living room that is discarded to your yard may not look good in two years when it is overpowering your yard. The same holds for the very popular Majesty Palm. Available almost anywhere, this palm does poorly indoors.

Palms come from very diverse climates and soil conditions and need a little boost of fertilizing on a regular basis to ensure their longevity and health. Find out the requirements for your favorite specimen and enjoy the beauty and gracefulness of these exceptional trees for years to come!

