GENERAL CARE

Palm trees are one of the most popular choices for indoor plants to grow. They provide the majestic beauty of a tropical garden and the ease of care is attractive. Mature palms adorn places like hotels and stately homes and foyers. They provide a tropical atmosphere and warmth to any place they reside. The less mature palms can sometimes be used as a desk plant for a small office and even in the bathrooms of some homes.

Indoor palm trees, like all plants, need the correct balance of water, light, fertilizer and warmth to thrive. Here are some of the fundamentals you will need to know to start with your new palm.

An inevitable problem encountered by growing palms indoors is the amount of dust that build up on the leaves over time. This can restrict the amount of light that gets through to the plant.

'Leaf shine' products should be avoided. The best way to refresh your palm is to wipe the leaves down with slightly soapy water or stand it outside during a summer shower.

WATERING

Indoor palms/cycads should be kept moist and never be allowed to dry out.

During the summer you will be watering as much as twice a week to maintain the moisture levels, whereas during winter you should water very sparingly.

Don't be tempted to over-water; most palms and cycads dislike their roots sitting in a saucer of water and the soil should be moist, not saturated.

Although not essential, indoor palms and cycads which will benefit from being watered with rain water or water from a softener. Rhapis is one of these.

FEEDING

Because they grow in a restricted space and controlled watering, the indoor palm trees require feeding every once in a while to compensate for the nutrients that are not present in the pot.

You can use The Palm Centre's specially formulated palm tree fertilizer.

Follow the instructions on the label carefully and adjust the quantity applied according to the pot and plant size.

For alkaline soils, you can also apply used coffee grounds or tea bags (make sure you skip the cream and sugar, though!).

PRUNING

Palms can grow to impressive sizes while indoors and stay healthy with the proper care. Some palms may naturally lose fronds as they acclimatise to indoor settings. Most potted palms need little pruning but do well when dead or dying fronds are regularly removed.

Prune during the correct season, generally speaking this means pruning either in the months of summer or spring. This way, you will be able to see which branches or sets of leaves are still healthy or are showing no signs of growing again.

When pruning, it is crucial to take care of the bark and avoid exposing the underlying layers.

Apply fertilizer one week before pruning. Use appropriate tools to prevent accidents or damage the bark.

Remove dead or dying fronds. Cleanly cut off yellow or brown fronds at the base of the stem.

Over-pruning can be deadly to an indoor palm tree. Always err on the side of caution.

Pruning the plant for aesthetic purposes isn't the best idea. You run the risk of damaging the palm beyond repair. However, sometimes it is necessary that is why you must use caution and knowledge before beginning. Let your plant live to a ripe old age, and not die because of carelessness.
POSITION

Palms and cycads sold for indoor use by the Palm Centre will be happy in the average home. Many will cope with the dry air and low light levels that winter and central heating produce.

To get the best from your palm or cycad you should keep it away from any direct sources of heat and choose a location where it receives bright natural daylight, but avoid direct sunshine through glass as this can burn the leaves.

Some palms/cycads like Howea and particularly Rhapis, cope with very low light levels but this isn’t to say they would not appreciate a brighter aspect.

Care should be taken with palms placed in the conservatory: young plants or naturally shade loving species like Chamaedorea can be scorched by direct sun through the glass, so adequate shade or filtered light should be provided.

Without exception, palms benefit from some humidity in the air. For this reason, bathrooms, kitchens and utility rooms are good places to grow them.

SOIL

A general purpose compost mixed with some John Innes #3 and perhaps some slow release fertilizer like Osmocote would be a good basis for your plant to thrive.

Need expert advice on how to care for your plants? help@palmcentre.co.uk

Find out more about plant care online at www.palmcentre.co.uk/IndoorPalmCare

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