

Saw palmetto - Plant



The saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*) is a great plant when used as ground filler in larger garden areas. With more than one at varying heights it really adds some dimension to your space. They add a beautiful contrast to the surrounding green vegetation.

Rating: Not Rated Yet

Price

Sales price R 123,456

Discount

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Description Saw palmetto develops numerous leaves from thick stems. The stems may remain underground, lie on the soil surface or stand erect. When growing from underground stems, a single saw palmetto grows to 7 feet tall and 7 feet wide. It can spread to 20 feet wide when the stems grow on the soil surface in a clump form.

When they grow into an erect form, the thick stems resemble trunks and the trees can reach as tall as 25 feet. Saw palmetto's leaves are fan blades that grow to 3 feet wide. The plant earns its name from the petioles, or leaf stalks, edged with sharp spines.

Common name: saw palmetto

Height: 6 to 8 feet

Difficulty level: Easy

Planting & Care

It grows best in dry, well-draining soil in full sun to partial shade. Most plants are started from nursery plants or rhizome cuttings, as seeds can take several years to germinate and become established. Plants or cuttings should be planted on 3- to 5-foot centers.

This hardy palm will only need watering when it is first planted; once it shows new growth, it is virtually maintenance free and can be left alone. It does not need fertilizing or pruning, although removing dead leaves will improve its appearance. Saw palmetto has a very long life span; according to the Smithsonian Marine Station at Fort Pierce, some specimens may be 700 years old.

Sunlight: Palm s prefer partial shade (or partial with some sunlight), as they are more than happy in low-light conditions.

Soil: Chalky, Loamy, Sandy soil : moist but well-drained.

Water: Water the plant until the soil is evenly moist. Do not over water the palm plant or leave it sitting in water. Check often to be sure that the plant is draining properly.

Temperature: They can handle a winter rest in cooler conditions, not less than 50 F. (10 C.). They do tolerate central heating.

Fertilizer: Feed your palm regularly during the growing season. If possible, use a palm fertilizer, which will contain all the micro nutrients and extra potassium and manganese. Potassium deficiency is especially common in palms—it shows up in yellowing or brownish fronds.

Care:

- Palms grow best when you let their roots fill the pot.
- They need soil-based potting compost and should not be repotted unnecessarily.
- They are sensitive to chemicals and will be damaged if you expose them to aerosol sprays.
- If you need to treat them with insecticides, be sure what you use is suitable for a palm.

Special Feature:

Palms tend to lend themselves to creating shadows and reflections. You can stand a palm in an alcove that is lined with a mirror and create stunning effects. If you put one on each side of a fireplace, it's even doubly stunning. The shadows cast by the palm's fronds can pattern a plain wall. Spotlights can create good strong light for bold shadows.

These are quite dramatic. Don't position spotlights too closely because this generates too much heat for the palm to withstand. Finally, lighting the plant from below can cast shadows onto opposite walls and even the ceiling.

Use

Culinary use:

- The apical meristem, or heart, of saw palmetto is edible.
- It provided food for pre-Columbian populations and early American Indian tribes.
- During the 16th century, the saw palmetto heart was a food source for Spanish settlers.
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Today, it provides food for wild animals such as black bears and feral pigs.

- The grape-like fruit is an important forage food as well.
- Many animals, including birds, foxes, white tail deer and gopher tortoises, eat the fruit.
- Bees use the flower nectar to make palmetto honey.

Reference:

<http://www.gardeningknowhow.com/houseplants/palms/growing-palms-indoors.htm>

<http://houseplants.about.com/od/pickingahouseplan1/a/PalmBasics.htm>