Palms for Pool and Patio  
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There’s nothing quite like being surrounded by boldly textured palms! Here are a few suggestions for success with Palms. Purchase your pool and palms at a local garden center as they usually acquire their palms from reputable growers that have techniques set up to ‘Light Transition’ palms before they are ever shipped to St. Louis. You get what you pay for in palms, resist that ‘great deal palm’ it probably came straight from the field and onto a truck.

Light  
Light will depend on the type of palm you choose to grow. The most important thing to note here is Full Sun Palms Outdoors require as much Full Sun Indoors as you can manage. Give good thought as to where palms will be placed in the home for winter. Supplemental light is almost a must for some palms.

Water  
Observe the soil surface in the pot for dryness. When you do water please water enough to ensure water flows from the bottom of the container. The watering process may need to be repeated to ensure this happens.

Never let the container go TOO DRY. (Take note roof top and balcony gardeners) Dry, hot, and windy conditions require more frequent watering. Moist or cold conditions usually require less frequent applications.

Salt buildup is a problem with palms grown in containers. Incomplete watering, along with fertilizers you give to the plant can result salt buildup in the soil. This buildup can result in leaf tip discoloration (burning), general plant decline and eventual death if not corrected. It bears repeating ….Salt buildup is a major problem with palms that receive limited water and are never thoroughly drenched!

Fertilizer  
Organic fertilizers such as Espoma Palm Tone are slower acting and have less chance of burning your palm. Fertilizer Palms 4 x a year with Palm Tone giving 1 teaspoon for every 4inches of pot diameter. Scratch it into the top of the soil evenly and water in... Ingredients of Palm Tone are : Dehydrated Manure, Feather Meal, Alfalfa Meal, Greensand, Crab Meal, Humates, Corn Gluten, Sulfate Of Potash & Sulfate Of Potash Magnesia …EARTH FRIENDLY! Sometimes an additional dose of Blood Meal is advisable for extra nitrogen.

Palms also enjoy a little extra boost of micro nutrients. Do this with caution, additional micro nutrients may be iron, sulphur, or magnesium. Very small doses maybe 4 x a year could help prevent yellowing foliage or spotted foliage. Usually by the time palms are exhibiting symptoms it is too late to save the look of the foliage. Although it is not a fertilizer, I would give a shot of Bio Tone periodically.
Pruning

Pruning palms should be done with great thought. Many are slow growing. People in the quest for perfection want to trim away leaves with damage or tears. Just remember, Palms in the real world have imperfections, repeating…they are not perfect. Even though these leaves are not perfect the leaves are providing a source of nutrition for the plant.

When trimming a frond follow the stem and cut close to the palm’s trunk leaving about an inch to two inch stub. Removing these stubs at pruning time can cause permanent scars to the trunk, increasing the chance of bacterial or fungal infections. This stub should be allowed to dry crisp and then they can be easily removed by hand.

Repotting

A palm can usually grow well in the same container for one to two years before transplanting into a larger container. Repot when the plant’s roots are coming out the bottom of your container, or when the plant is just too big and unstable for the container it is in. A container must give ample soil volume for growth and weight for stability. In general, palms prefer deep pots to shallow ones. Remember repotting is best performed in the spring or early summer, a time when the plant and its roots can grow optimally.

When repotting a palm into a larger pot, you should give ample new potting mix below the old root ball. I mix small amount of Espoma Palm Tone fertilizer or Espoma Blood Meal into fresh Fafard 52 potting medium and generous amounts of Espoma Soil Perfector in the bottom of the new pot.

Next place the root ball into the container carefully, taking care not to break it apart. This is an example of where we DO NOT tease or separate the roots during repotting. Bismarkia nobilis are known for setbacks after repotting because of root disturbance.

Please fill the sides with the new soil pushing down the side firmly leaving no air space. Do not cover the top of the existing root mass with soil and please leave several inches from the top of the pot to the soil line for easier watering. Next, water the repotted palm and do this at least three times in a row to ensure the water has wet the entire root mass. If soil has settled, please fill with the open spaces with additional soil and water again. It could be a big plus if you watered with Espoma BioTone at this point. Remember, you should see the water draining easily from the pot. If you like you can cover the soil with a top dressing of Orchid Bark.

The following palms are some of the easiest to grow and move indoors to outdoors. When making the move outdoors it is important to go to shade first and then to sun which takes about three weeks transition time. Start in early April when light and temperatures are more moderate. Move back indoors September – October. Don’t forget to spray off the foliage and soap spray before returning the plant to the home.
The Palm List for Sun

**Windmill Palm, Trachycarpus fortunei.** The trunks are covered with brown-black fibers that appear as hair from a distance, and with age turn gray, old trees lose the fibers to and have a single stem trunk. The fronds are 2 feet long and 2 feet wide and have a bright green color. It is a slow grower. This Palm requires Sun indoors and out. Windmill Palm is a cold tolerant palm and has been reported to survive in the city of St. Louis, Zone 6 if planted in the ground in spring and if very specific wintering conditions are met. *Anybody tried this yet?*

**Bismarkia Palm, Bismarkia noblis,** Bismarkia sports silver blue fan shaped leaves, develops a single stem and is very striking. It needs lots of space as the leaf spread can reach 6-8 feet easily. It grows a little quicker than some fan type palms. Requires Sun indoors and out. We are talking a big south window with this palm. Bismarkia is very fussy about repotting. This palm tolerates lower temperatures right above freezing and so it can be enjoyed out on the patio into October.

**Pygmy Date Palm, Phoenix roebelenii,** A feathery palm, developing multi stems, and has the *Las Vegas Look.* Leaves are dark green on top and lighter almost silvery below. This palm is a slow grower. Requires Sun indoors or out. This plant is fussy about repotting and enjoys good humidity indoors. This palm tolerates lower temperatures right above freezing and so it can be enjoyed out on the patio into October.

**Queen Palm, Syagrus romanzoffiana,** Very fluffy, full leaves develop with maturity and it is a single stem palm. Requires Sun indoors or out. This plants height will be determined by the size of the pot. Repot carefully each year to help gain height15-20’ can be attained. This is assuming you have vaulted ceilings! No cutting this palm back! This palm tolerates lower temperatures right above freezing and so it can be enjoyed out on the patio into October.

The Palm List for Shade

**Bamboo Palm, Chamaedorea seifrizii,** This palm displays a bamboo look in the pot. Slowly it will drop lower foliage and display bamboo type stems. This palm is multi stemmed. Bamboo Palms require Shade outdoors and Part Sun indoors. Keep misted when indoors and well watered at all times. I have seen this palm get 6-8’ easily.

**Lady Palm, Syagrus romanzoffiana,** This is a rich looking palm, just a perfect palm for dressing up the formal rooms of a home. This is a multi stemmed Palm. Lady Palms require Shade outdoors and Part Sun indoors. This is a pricy palm and you often find it sold in 10” pots at garden centers. This plant is bushy slowly attaining 5-6’. This plant enjoys frequent leaching of the soil to prevent leaf burn. Caution with the plant food.

**Fishtail Palm, Caryota mitis,** The Fishtail palm gets its name from the appearance of its jagged, chopped edged fronds. The Fishtail Palm looks great in contemporary rooms. It is a multi stemmed palm with a vertical habit. Provide Shade outdoors and Part Sun indoors. Protect the foliage from drying winds outdoors. This Palm enjoys frequent watering and fertilizing. This plant enjoys heat and humidity. Caution blooming fronds will expire and need removal. Seeds produced should be removed and using gloves to avoid itching.

Resources;
An Encyclopedia of Cultivated Palms, Riffle and Craft
Betrock’s Guide to Landscape Palms, Alan Merow
Palms won’t Grow Here and other myths, David Francko