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How to introduce  
**ARCHITECTURAL  
PALMS  
& CYCADS**



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# How to introduce ARCHITECTURAL PALMS & CYCADS

Palms and cycads, while not even faintly related, do share similarities of form, style and feel. They look particularly comfortable in each other's company, so don't hesitate to combine them in the garden.

## Palms

While we tend to think of palms as being the trees of the tropics, they in fact exist from snow bound Taiwan and some of the coldest islands in New Zealand through to the wild deserts of the world. Palms certainly bring that atmosphere of steamy equatorial lushness to a landscape like no other family of plants. This is an amazingly varied family of plants with more than 2600 species or individual types in the wild. In the past, palms symbolised victory, peace and fertility, while today you would most likely see them depicted on travel brochures. With so many varieties it is easy to see that there is a palm for pretty much every spot in the landscape both outdoors and indoors.



## Cycads

These are one of the oldest plant families on earth, having been around well before dinosaurs started eating their fronds. These primitive cone bearing plants make their growth in massive spurts followed by a long period of inaction. They tend to be very spiky and sculptural in form which, combined with their toughness and water saving ways, makes them the 'darlings' of garden designers.

Many cycads have poisonous fruits but all indigenous cultures found ways to neutralise the toxins in order to use the fruits as a food source. In WA our zamia palm (*Macrozamia riedlei*) produces huge crops of bright orange-red fruits which can be rendered harmless by soaking, burying and then roasting the nuts. When early Dutch visitor Willem De Vlamingh tried to copy the local Noongar Aborigines he observed eating the fruits, his crew became violently ill with what has been called the "Zamia staggers".



## Planting

Adding a good quality soil conditioner to gutless sand and even clay soils is the first step. **Baileys Soil Improver Plus** can be added to the planting hole in the base and also mixed in with the soil you use to backfill around the roots. Mulch is an essential for gardens in Perth so a 50mm layer of **Baileys Moisture Mulch** is recommended after planting. Allow the plant to settle in for 4 to 6 weeks before feeding.

## Potting and repotting

Both palms and cycads can perform well in pots for many years. Use a top quality mix such as **Baileys Premium Potting Mix**, and repot into fresh mix every two years. If it is impractical to go to a larger pot then shave off some of the old mix around the edge of the pot and replace this with fresh mix.



## Maintaining a good show

A controlled release plant food specific to Palms applied every 3 to 4 months during warmer growing months will keep the plants growing and in good colour. Alternatively if you are looking at a more organic approach, or wish to use a broader spectrum fertiliser while feeding the entire garden, apply **Baileys Energy Garden** every 6-8 weeks. Avoid winter feeding when plants are not actively growing.