

Tropical Palm Oasis™



Planting and Identifying your Plants

The Tropical Palm Oasis contains everything you need to make your own tropical garden in a top-of-the-line windowsill greenhouse. This deluxe set includes an assortment of lush palms—the Date Palm, Cabbage Palm, and Pony Tail Palm—that are easy to grow and will last for years. Create a seashore scene with the included seashells, natural sand, and blue gravel. Complete growing instructions and care information is included.

Tropical Palm Oasis

An oasis is a spring or waterhole situated in a hot desert. Oases are formed when underground streams or rivers flow to the desert's surface. In most parts of the world, there is water underground, a phenomenon known as the "water table." Even in deserts this water table is present. In some places (usually at low altitudes) it is possible for the water table to reach the earth's surface. When this happens, an oasis is formed. Oases are especially likely to form along the few rivers that may flow through deserts. Oases have many benefits: they provide water for people living in desert regions and allow food plants like date palms, figs, olives and apricots to be grown. They also provide shade, which is a rare find in deserts.

Location of Oases

Oases are located all over the world, mainly in Egypt, Africa, and California, and usually in deserts that are between 25,000 to 250,000 square feet in size. The five most important oases in the world—Farafirah, Bahriyah, Dakhilah, Kharijah, and Siwah—are located in the Libyan Desert. There are 158 desert fan palm oases in North America, with five of them being in Joshua Tree National Park in California.

Contents

- Pack of Date Palm, Pony Tail Palm, and Cabbage Palm seed packs
- Bag of natural sand
- Bag of blue gravel
- Bag of mixed seashells (two varieties)
- Planting greenhouse
- Planting mixture
- Instruction and information booklet

Planting Your Tropical Palm Oasis

Note: Don't plant all the seeds at once. Plant what you need, and save the rest in case you need to replant; we include enough seeds to replant at least one time.

1. Massage the bag of soil to remove any clumps.
2. Cut open the bag and pour the soil into the greenhouse base.
3. Add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of water, and let it absorb.
4. Mix water and planting mixture thoroughly with a spoon.
5. Add another $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water and smooth the surface.
6. To lay stone or sand, first press down firmly on the moist soil to make a depression, then fill with the sand or gravel. Use the blue gravel to form the water in your "oasis" and use the sand to create the surrounding beach area.
7. Place the sea shells where you would like them.
8. Once your water and beaches are laid, you can plant the seed.
9. Sprinkle smallest and largest seeds (Cabbage Palm and Date Palm) on the surface of the soil; they need light to germinate.
10. Slightly cover the Pony Tail Palm seeds.
11. Put the top on your planted greenhouse and place it in a windowsill or very near a window. A western or southern exposure is best. An eastern exposure is okay, but a northern exposure should be avoided.
12. Seeds will germinate in 3 to 7 weeks

Caring For Your Tropical Palm Oasis

Watering

- If you overwater the terrarium, tip it gently to pour out the extra water, leave the top off, and place it in an area with a southern exposure until desired moisture level is reached.
- Your growing mixture is inert and contains no fertilizer. For maximum growth, fertilize your terrarium in the spring and summer with a water-soluble houseplant food or time-release pellets.
- It is advisable to remove the top and let the planter dry out between waterings a few times a year. Do not do this until your plants are at least 6 months old.

Location

- The best location for your terrarium is on a windowsill with a Western or Southern exposure. Be sure the window is not drafty.
- Your plants thrive in bright direct light and can live in bright indirect light.
- Your plants will naturally reach toward the light, so rotate your greenhouse every week. If they are stretching too much, they may need more light.
- Do not place your terrarium close to a heating or cooling vent.
- Do not place your terrarium outside in the hot sun. The temperature inside the terrarium will rise to levels that are not safe for the plants. You may place it outdoors in the shade and when it is below 80 degrees (26° Celsius).
- A common problem with terrariums is that they are easily knocked over. Keep this in mind as you choose the location for your windowsill greenhouse.

Other Notes

- If mold forms, remove it with a twig or water the greenhouse with a 1:50 mix of hydrogen peroxide to water. This is about one capful per seven ounces of water.
- If you remove the top to allow the plants to grow larger, be sure to check the moisture level every few days.
- You can trim your plants back. It is important to cut them above a set of leaves and to water afterward, as pruning can be a shock to some plants.
- It is okay to let the plants bloom, but keep the plants from going dormant by trimming off any seed pods before seeds form.
- You can transplant your plants into other containers. Be sure to water first, and remove as big of a ball of soil around the roots as you can. To replant, make sure the soil in the new container is moist, place the soil ball into a pre-dug hole, and water thoroughly.

Interesting Facts About Varieties of Plants in Your Garden

Date Palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*)

The Date Palm grows in the desert where water is present—at an oasis. The tree produces fruit, the leaves were used for brooms and roofs, and the crown of the plant makes a durable rope.



The Date Palm can grow up to 80 feet tall and is considered a tree, but it is actually more closely related to lilies and grass in its structure.

The common feature of all palms is that the only growing point is at the tip of each stem. The Date Palm is a "Feather Palm" with a noticeably narrow leaflet that will grow into a fascinating foliage plant within a year. The Date Palm is native to Eastern Arabia, as well as the French Riviera, Southern Italy, Sicily, and Greece

Cabbage Palm (*Cordyline australis, indivisa*)

The Cabbage Palm is easy to cultivate and fast growing, able to reach a height of up to 65 feet. The Cabbage Palm flowers frequently, is sweetly scented, and produces abundant fruit and seed. No exotic palm garden is complete without it.



Pony Tail Palm (*Beaucarnea recurvata*)

The pony tail palm is found in semi-desert and scrub areas reaching from the Southern US to Guatemala. It is an evergreen tree with a flask-shaped base. The trunk is palm-like when young, turning gray-brown and eventually becoming covered with bark when it ages. The deep green leaves, which can grow to 5 feet long and ³/₄ inch wide, are channeled, curved, and sometimes twisted. These long, thin leaves give the plant its name.

Although this plant is called a palm, it is actually a succulent. Its trunk is palm-like when young, and as it ages it forms a bulbous base that holds water.

It grows slowly, eventually capable of being 15 feet high with a 12-foot-wide base.

Terrariums - General Information, History, How They Work

General Information

Terrariums, a favorite since the 1800s, continue to enjoy popularity today. Creating a terrarium is easy, fun, and inexpensive. Care is minimal and they can go for months without water under proper conditions. Also, a wide variety of plants can be grown that would normally fail in the dry, drafty environment of the average home. Avid gardeners celebrate terrariums as a way to extend their gardening season all year long.

History

Terrariums are miniature, self-contained ecosystems. Once created, these closed environments can go for months unattended without even the addition of water. The history of terrariums is rooted in the Victorian Age where they were used in parlors to house delicate and exotic plants.

The invention of the terrarium is credited to Dr. Nathaniel Ward, a London physician who discovered it by accident. While experimenting with cocoons in covered jars, he found tiny plants growing and thriving in the soil of the jars, even as plants in his backyard were dying from polluted air. Next, he successfully experimented with growing ferns in covered containers. The result: the first terrariums, then known as "Wardian cases." These were large, enclosed containers used for growing delicate plants in the home or transporting plants over long distances. The terrariums used most often today are small, ornamental versions of the Wardian case.

How They Work

Terrariums are a self-contained environment. Once planted, they need nothing from the outside except a little indirect sunlight; they can even go without water for a long period of time. Moisture in the terrarium evaporates from the soil and plant leaves, condensing on the roof and walls. The condensed water drips down, re-moistening the soil in a continual closed-loop process. The atmosphere inside is jungle-like, with high humidity, warm temperatures, and no drafts—perfect conditions for many of the tropic-native houseplants that are common today. As long as the terrarium's top is sealed, this process can continue for months or even years.

Visit www.dunecraft.com to locate retailers near you, learn more about your product, and explore our other great products. Questions? Email info@dunecraft.com or call 1-800-306-4168.



© DuneCraft, Inc. 2005
All Rights Reserved
PO Box 808
Chagrin Falls, Ohio 44022

