



Pacific Northwest Palm & Exotic Plant Society

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www.hardypalm.com

Suitable Hardy Palm Species for BC's Lower Mainland

There is only ONE reliable species, *Trachycarpus fortunei*, with several subspecies and selections. These are palmate, with fiber on the trunk. There are no reliably hardy pinnate palms. If you want more variety, see **Almost Hardy Palms** sheet.

Reliably hardy (to about -18C when mature):

- *Trachycarpus fortunei* (Windmill Palm), by far the most common palm in the Vancouver area.
- *Trachycarpus fortunei* 'Wagnerianus'*, once rare in BC but now becoming available

*Once considered a separate species *Trachycarpus wagnerianus*. This name is still in common use. Slower growing, with smaller fronds that make a "cup" (see photos, top of next page).

Horticultural aspects of Windmill Palm (*Trachycarpus fortunei*)

- **Hardy to about -18C when mature** (but only -8C until trunk is formed). Mature plants can recover from total defoliation
- If planted in reasonable soil, with fertilizer, trunk grows about 30 cm (1 ft)/year to 30 ft (10m) or more.
- Overall spread of mature fronds about 12 ft (4 m).
- Dead leaves persist to form a skirt, considered unsightly by most. These can be removed, but only after petioles droop below the horizontal position. Otherwise, the health of the palm is compromised.
- Trunk fibers persist but can be removed without affecting hardiness.
- Dioecious but so many are in cultivation female fruit is usually fertile and they are now self seeding in BC.
- **Only real problem is BOREDOM** since this species is now overused!

Varying the use of *Trachycarpus* palms to avoid boredom

1. Plant in groups to obtain a grove (straight up) or desert island (initial tilt) effect. Spacing should accommodate eventual frond spread. Vary the palm sizes so fronds will be at staggered heights. Groups of 3 (or other odd numbers) seem to work well.



2. Strip the fibre off the trunk to reveal tropical looking ridged trunk beneath.

Note - this process is not reversible, so the look is permanent!

Stripping seems to not affect hardiness as long as the top foot or two remains unstripped. Takes about 1 hr/foot using a box cutter, starting at the bottom. Ask us for more detailed procedure if interested.

