



# *Trachycarpus fortunei* Windmill Palm<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

The erect, single trunk of Windmill Palm is covered with dense, brown, hairlike fibers, and the three-foot-wide, fan-shaped fronds extend from 1 (Fig. 1).5-foot-long, rough-edged petioles. The trunk appears to be wrapped in burlap. A very slow-growing palm, Windmill Palm can reach 40 feet in height but is often seen much smaller, 10 to 20 feet tall. Windmill Palm works well as a framing tree, accent, specimen, patio or urn subject. It is ideal for use as an accent in a shady shrub border or by a front entryway. It does well in confined areas and is hardy to 10-degrees F. or lower.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scientific name:** *Trachycarpus fortunei*

**Pronunciation:** tray-kee-KAR-pus FOR-too-nee-eye

**Common name(s):** Windmill Palm

**Family:** *Arecaceae*

**USDA hardiness zones:** 8 through 11 (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** container or above-ground planter; suitable for growing indoors; near a deck or patio; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

## DESCRIPTION

**Height:** 10 to 20 feet

**Spread:** 6 to 10 feet

**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more



Figure 1. Mature Windmill Palm.

or less identical crown forms

**Crown shape:** palm; upright

**Crown density:** open

**Growth rate:** slow

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Texture:** medium

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate; spiral

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** star-shaped

**Leaf venation:** palmate

**Leaf type and persistence:** broadleaf evergreen; evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** 18 to 36 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

### Flower

**Flower color:** white; yellow

**Flower characteristics:** pleasant fragrance; inconspicuous and not showy; summer flowering

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** round

**Fruit length:** .5 to 1 inch; < .5 inch

**Fruit covering:** fleshy

**Fruit color:** blue

**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** grow mostly upright and will not droop; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns

**Pruning requirement:** needs little pruning to develop a strong structure

**Breakage:** resistant

**Crown shaft:** no

### Culture

**Light requirement:** tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in the shade

**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

### **Other**

**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding tree:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** little, if any, potential at this time

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** not known to be susceptible

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

## **USE AND MANAGEMENT**

Windmill Palm should be grown in shade or partial shade on fertile soil to look its best, but it is also tolerant of full sun on well-drained soils when given ample moisture in the northern part of its range. Plants should be watered faithfully. Protection from harsh winds will minimize leaf tearing, but plants can be used successfully close to the shore, being quite tolerant of salt and wind. There are fine examples of mass plantings where palms are spaced six to 10 feet apart around a patio or sitting area. They have also been used very successfully lining an entry walk to a large building. This adds a formal elegance to any structure, especially one with a glass facade.

Propagation is by seed.

### **Pests**

Scales and palm aphids are pests of Windmill Palm.

### **Diseases**

Windmill Palm may be infected by root rot, moderately susceptible to lethal yellowing disease, and leaf spots.