

gardening express

for everyone's garden

A Cultural Guide to Your New Plants – with compliments of www.GardeningExpress.co.uk

- Upon receipt of your plants, carefully remove them from the postal pack. The root ball should be moist, if the plants appear to be dry stand them in a saucer of water for a few minutes until moist.
 - We recommend planting directly into the garden in well prepared weed free soil containing plenty of organic matter such as compost. At this stage a fertiliser and soil-conditioning product can also be applied to the soil following the manufacturers instructions. Make a planting hole large enough to take the plant's root ball and incorporate compost with the soil removed, use this soil when backfilling the hole around the plant. Firm in well and water the plants.
 - Alternatively, plants can be potted into slightly larger pots using good quality compost. They can then be planted out as for stage two when they have filled these pots. Once potted situate your plants in a bright position.
 - All that now remains to be done is to water your plants regularly in dry weather and give an occasional liquid feed during the growing season.
- NB: We are now using biological pest control on the nursery, if you find insects on your plants they are likely to be beneficial.**

Every effort has been made to ensure the instructions given are accurate and will enable you to do the job safely and successfully. Please follow them carefully and seek expert advice in the event of any difficulty. Information and pictures are a guide only, different growing and weather conditions may produce varying results.

PLEASE NOTE: At certain times of year many plants have been trimmed or died back for winter and will not reappear again until spring. This is by no means an indication of actual size and quality as all plants despatched are very strong and will always grow away vigorously when the weather improves. Similarly plants sent in the summer months may have to be trimmed to fit inside packing cases, but they will grow back vigorously.

For more detailed advice and guidance about looking after your new plants, please visit our website. We've teamed up with VideoJug, the UK's leading video portal for life advice, to exclusively provide a range of How-To Guides, for help and advice in your garden. You can check out the videos advising the best ways to look after your garden and plants, covering all aspects from planting & pruning to growing your own fruit and veg!

Frequently asked questions about our deliveries.....

Q. My plants are larger/smaller than expected?

A. Due to seasonal variations in plant availability and growth, plants can often be larger or smaller than you may have expected. All sizes quoted online are approximate. We grow all of our plants out of doors to produce the highest quality tough hardy stock. We avoid forcing plants on early in the year undercover like most garden centres do, to avoid problems such as a late frost could cause once in your garden.

Q. I was expecting more items than I appear to have received.

A. Many items such as hedging are bundled up in multiples to aid shipping and protect them whilst in transit. These bundles simply need splitting down into the individual plants before setting them out in your garden.

Q. Some of my order appears to be missing, when will it be delivered?

A. Please check your packing list or account online. Any item marked TF or 0 is to follow at a later time. This may be because it is temporarily out of stock, an item that ships direct from a manufacturer or is a seasonal item. Seasonal items will be supplied at the correct planting time as dictated by the weather etc. Approx dispatch periods are indicated throughout the website. If an item is indicated as being shipped and is not present with your delivery, please contact our customer care team by logging onto your account and raising a support ticket.

Q. My friend bought me the plant I have just received from you yesterday! What's your returns procedure?

A. If you are not completely satisfied with your purchase, simply return the item or items to us in their original condition within 14 days of receipt. We will issue a full refund on receipt, or exchange the item for another if preferred. Some products are non-returnable as they have a limited shelf life. These products are clearly marked with a '+' next to the product name. The item is your responsibility until it reaches us. For your own protection, we recommend that you send the parcel using a delivery service that insures you for the value of the goods. Please note that due to the nature of our products - plants, pot sizes and dimensions may vary between seasons - so do not be alarmed if your trees have no leaves in winter! Please refer to our website for further information about our returns policy. Please include a covering letter detailing why you are returning the goods and your order number, and send this along with the original invoice and parcel of goods to: Gardening Express RETURNS, Chelmsford, Essex. CM1 4UA

Hello and welcome to Gardening Express!

If you've not purchased from us before, you've just discovered a well kept secret that gardeners in the know have been enjoying for years. We've built our business from a small concern into a fully fledged wing of the UK's horticultural army; supplying all types of people our plants. From TV shows and celebrities, garden designers and professional landscapers to people just brightening their surroundings at home, we are here to help. The cornerstones of our business are quality, service and value for money. We think you'll agree that the offer you're unpacking is a great deal and we hope to welcome you to our website soon.

www.GardeningExpress.co.uk

Growing Palm Trees in the UK

Palm trees are a reminder of balmy and warm tropical holidays abroad, but it is not too difficult to grow them in your garden at home in Britain. Our cold hardy palms can tolerate British weather and low temperatures down to -6°C. It is not cold that kills them so much as excess moisture and biting easterly winds, however, once fully established, many palms withstand temperatures even lower.

The different palms that are available range enormously, sometimes stiff and jaunty, sometimes soft and floppy, the trunks can be hairy or grooved, bulbous or lean, each with their own shape and character. In the UK Palms are very slow-growing but otherwise easy to keep. They can be kept potted at the size you want - effectively dwarfed, simply by keeping the root run restricted, which they actually love and benefit from provided they are kept well fed.

Your new Palm will enjoy full sun, or dappled shade, a hot sheltered position is best with lots of water after planting and until established, thereafter no need to water unless very dry. You don't need to prune garden palms but do cut off any dead leaves. They are generally very easy to grow and long lived.

Planting palm trees is similar in most ways, to planting other kinds of trees. Try to plant your tree shortly after delivery; if there is going to be any time lag between delivery and planting, make sure that the tree's root ball is kept moist but not soaking. The best time of year to plant is during the warmer months of the year.

Remove your palm from the nursery pot – being very careful; you may have to cut the pots off from many palms as they are restricted in smaller pots. Dig a hole wide enough to fit the root ball with plenty of room to spare. Twice as wide might be a good rule of thumb in many cases. The hole should be just deep enough so that the tree is planted at the depth at which it was grown. Do not plant the tree any deeper as this may deprive the roots of nutrients and water. When the tree has been situated in the hole, backfill with the freshly dug soil. It is beneficial at this time to incorporate a good quality compost into the soil being used to back fill the hole, and use Root-grow to help the palm get established. It is essential that you plant your palm in free draining soil, if your soil retains excess moisture this could be detrimental to the palms health in winter. We recommend incorporating large volumes of compost and sharp-sand and gravel into heavy soils before planting to help drainage.

Once planted, firm your palm in well. We recommend you lay down a layer of mulch around the tree - this could be chipped bark, gravel or another topping 5-10cms thick. This will help retain moisture over the summer months whilst the palm is getting established. Frequent watering and feeding is crucial for newly-planted palm trees. Daily for about the first two weeks and then tapering off over several months as the tree establishes itself. In the early stages over the warm summer months it is important to never allow your tree to dry out as this will severely weaken your new palm, and you want it to be strong and healthy for best chances of surviving winter.

If you plant into planters instead, it is essential to provide drainage in these containers. Firstly, drill several holes in the base of the planter, then add a layer of gravel, stones or old broken plant pots, before adding good quality multi-purpose compost around the root-ball of your tree. We have root-grow and feed available online to help your new plants get established.

When the autumnal weather comes and temperatures start to fall, palms are like us, and do like to try and keep as warm as possible. This is easy for potted palms, as they can be moved to a well ventilated greenhouse or conservatory to protect them from excess winter winds and rain. If you do not have this luxury, we suggest moving planters next to the house, and keep them as sheltered as possible. Ensure they are not getting too wet in the winter; you only need keep the soil just damp when the weather gets cooler – never wet or saturated. Some people also wrap their pots in thick layers of bubble wrap to help insulate roots. We recommend that before snows arrive, normally by mid-December in the UK, that you tie up the leaves of your palm together to protect the crown. This helps excess winter rain and moisture to run off and stops snow sitting in the heart of the plant. If moisture freezes at the main growing point of the palm, this can be fatal. Ensure any leaves and debris are cleared from the heart of the plant before you tie it up. If we are expected to have particularly cold conditions and winds too, this can cause dehydration, drying out the palm. Once tied up, you can put a jacket on it. Simply wrap in horticultural fleece and tie in. A layer of plastic or bubble wrap to keep this dry could also be added as an outer layer, but when temperatures rise, and fair weather comes, even if for just a few days this plastic should be removed as it could encourage condensation and moulds.

If your palm is in the ground, so long as it is not waterlogged and water can drain away, you can just follow the wrapping up method to help protect it from the elements. Remember these methods are not guaranteed, but can only be beneficial, and no amount of wrapping will prevent freezing if temperatures fall to very low levels. If all the above sounds like extra hassle, then another method of giving your palm the best chances of coming through winter unscathed it to buy a special cosy plant jacket. These easily fit over the plant and zip up – avoiding all the wrapping methods above – or do both. We hope this guide helps with your Palm growing, the older your palm gets and more established in your garden, the better chances of survival each year over winter with minimal protection.