

Palm Tree Growth Cycle

Information for
group leaders

Below you can see what the growth cycle for a palm tree looks like. The different growth stages and plant parts are explained.

Most palms reproduce from seed as shown below. Some palms are able to make their own offshoots, which create new shoots.

Try with your group - As you explore the Palm House, can you identify the stages of growth you can find by looking at our palm trees?

Palm tree plant - A mature plant is fully grown and able to reproduce. It can make flowers and fruit. They have a woody stem and a crown of leaves.

Flowers - The reproductive part of the tree that often blossoms in the spring. Once pollinated, they become fruit which ripen in the autumn. Flowers have bright colours, smells and nectar to encourage pollinators to pay them a visit.

Pollination - Palm flowers are usually pollinated by insects and sometimes wind. Once the flowers are pollinated they turn into fruit. Insects help to pollinate most of the world's plants! Pollination is when pollen grains from the male anther of a flower are transferred to the female stigma of a flower.

Inflorescence - A flower stalk with many clusters of small flowers which will turn into the stalk that holds the fruit.

Fruit - After the flower is pollinated, the fertilized ovary in the flower turns into a fruit. In palms they are date-like in appearance and called drupes. Some palms have fruit that are tasty but many are not edible. The dates we eat come from the *Phoenix dactylifera*, the edible date tree. The Cretan and Canary Island Date Palm fruit is not very tasty!

Seed - Found within the plant's fruit. It has everything that a plant needs to begin growing.

Soil - A mixture of tiny particles of rock, dead plants and animals, air and water. Soil holds the nutrients that help plants to grow.

Germination - This is when a new plant grows out from a seed. A palm seed can take 2-12 weeks to germinate. It likes to be warm to do so - around 20 °C - 30 °C. It also needs moisture from the soil.

Cotyledons - The first plant leaf or leaves that emerge from a seed when it germinates.

Monocot - Cotyledons that only have 1 leaf. Palms are monocots. Some plants are dicots, which have 2 seed leaves.

Seedling - A young plant grown from a seed.

Sprout - A young palm tree grown from a seed or an offshoot.

