



Pathfinder Honour: Trainer's Notes

Palms, Fiji



Instructions to Trainers / Instructors of this Honour

Thankyou for being involved with this Honour. These notes have been developed to assist in teaching / instructing this honour. We recognise that there is much more information available and we are grateful that you should share your expertise.

Please remember that Honours are designed to develop our Pathfinders in many ways; their interests, their knowledge and their relationship with their Saviour and Creator. Your enthusiasm and creativity will have a huge impact on those doing the honour.

To complete an Honour, the following (where applicable) must be completed satisfactorily:

- Physical and Practical Requirements.
- Honour Workbook.
- Honour Assessment Sheet. (*On SPD Honour Website but Leader's level access is required*)

Additional Reference Material

Watling, D (2005). *Palms of the Fiji Islands*. Colorcraft Ltd, Hong Kong.

Acknowledgements

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INTRODUCTION

Requirements 1,2,3,4 and 7 are covered in the Palms Honour Trainer's Notes.

These trainer's notes have been compiled specially for Requirements 5 and 6 as they apply to Fiji.

Palms of the Fiji Islands are a distinctive component of the country's natural heritage. This honour aims to develop a sense of awareness on the importance of palm trees in Fiji. Specific emphasis and approaches that promote better and more effective understanding of this natural heritage will be provided in detail in this honour

Trainers and counsellors must note that one's heritage and cultural activities are vital components of a person's identity. Therefore the knowledge of trainers towards this honour is important to a child learning the art and skills of this honour.

This honour will offer opportunities for pathfinders to:

- Develop holistically - cognitively, physically, socially, emotionally, and linguistically),
- Explore and express their ideas,
- Find out about themselves and others,
- Work cooperatively with others, and
- Communicate with others

REQUIREMENT 5: Draw (or photograph) and name the six different palm trees which grow in your area showing clearly the leaf formation, flowers and seed shape as well as the fruit.

Fiji Fan Palm *Pritchardia Pacifica*.

It is one of the world's most beautiful fan palms. Fiji Fan Palm is native to Fiji in the Southwest Pacific. You can't help but think about Hawaii by looking at this palm.

Fiji Fan Palm Description

It has straight smooth trunk with some fibre patterning at the base. It has numerous palmate leaves which are very large and nearly as wide as long. The shallowly split leaves are rich lime green with a yellowish midrib. This ornamental palm has fragrant brownish flowers. The spherical fruit is 11-12 mm in diameter, turning red then black at maturity.



Growing Fiji Fan Palm Tree

Fiji Fan Palm is a fast growing palm that will grow up to 10 feet (3m). It prefers partial sun. This species is particularly tolerant of salty soils, making it an excellent choice for planting along the coasts in the tropics. Fiji Fan Palm can tolerate cold up to 35F. (2C)

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Dwarf Palmetto Palm *Sabal minor*

Dwarf Palmetto Palm is native to United States and may also be seen in some parts of the Fiji especially in resorts and hotels along the western side of the Fiji Islands.

Sabal Minor Palm Description

Usually stem less, the leaves arising from an underground stock. Dwarf Palmetto Palm leaf blades are longer than the leaf stalks, fan shaped, and can reach as much as 4 feet (1.2m)wide. They have narrow segments notched at the tip. This palm gets white flowers that turn into the black fruit about 1/2 inch (13mm)wide in long clusters. Plant forms a trunk when grown in standing water.



Queen Palm *Syagrus romanzoffiana*

The Queen palm is native to the South American woodlands of Brazil and Argentina. Queen Palm is by far the most popular Florida Palm Tree. This inexpensive, elegant palm is a great addition to any tropical garden.

Queen Palm Description

It has a unique appearance because of its dark green lacy fonds that have double rows of leaflets. Its feathery leaves can grow up to 15 inches (380mm) long with long petioles. It has smooth grey trunk with evenly spaced horizontal leaf scars.



Queen Palm will surprise with beautiful clusters of creamy flowers during the summer time that will put a smile on your face. In the early winter a green fruit will appear that will turn orange as they ripe. This fruit is round shape and about 1 inch (25mm)long with one single seed inside. Queen Palm fruit smells nice but is not edible.

Growing Queen Palm

Queen Palm is a fast growing palm that can tolerate cold down to 25F (-3C). It grows around 6 feet (1.8m) per year after establishing. This palm can get to 50 feet (15m) tall and 20 feet (6m) wide. Queen Palm grows very well in full sun. Full sun with some shade would be perfect for Queen Palm.

Queen Palm is one of the most popular *Florida Palm Trees*



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There are over 3,800 varieties of Palm Trees. The most popular Florida Palm Trees which are available in Fiji areas follows.



Coconut Palm - *Cocos nucifera* is one of the finest Florida Palm Trees.



Areca Palm - *Chrysalidocarpus lutescens* has also been called yellow palm, butterfly palm, yellow butterfly palm, cane palm and golden feather palm.



Lady Palm - *Rhapis excelsa*. If you are looking for an indoor palm Lady Palm is a great choice. It will happily live under low light conditions or bright filtered light.



Majesty Palm - *Ravenea rivularis*. The Majesty Palm is a very shade tolerant palm that will reach 10' in height very quickly.



Sago Palm - *Cycas revoluta*. The name is misleading as the Sago Palm is a cycad and very poisonous until it has been processed to remove the poisons. The palm from which the food sago is made is *Metroxylon sagu*.



Royal Palm - *Roystonea oleracea* is popular in many warm, coastal landscapes, particularly in southern Florida and parts of California.



Queen Palm - *Syagrus romanzoffiana* is by far the most popular Florida Palm Tree. This inexpensive, elegant palm is a great addition to any tropical garden.

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REQUIREMENT 6. By writing short paragraphs or notes, either:

(a) Describe the role palm trees play in your culture:

- (i). Their significance to your culture.**
- (ii). Their uses for food and how to prepare that food**
- (iii). Other uses besides that of food.**

(i). Their significance to your culture (Fiji).

Coconut Palms in Fiji

Like all Pacific Islanders, Fijians have a long and close association with this palm and have made full use of the tree.

It is often referred to as 'nature's greatest gift to man'.

Niu is the universal name for the coconut amongst the Fijians, but at least 11 varieties have been recognised in Fiji together with Rotuma:



Varieties of Coconuts in Fiji are as follows:

- Niu yabu (light coloured coconut)-tall palms with green nuts
- Niu damu (orange coconut)-tall palm with orange nuts
- Niu ni toga-(Tongan coconut) or niu Kitu (coconut shell used as water container)-tall palms with large nuts
- Niu drau or buludrau – a tall palm which bears a large number of very small nuts on each bunch. They are used only for drinking, since they are too small and the flesh too thin for making copra.
- Niu magimagi-a tall palm bearing large, elongated nuts which have thick husk, favoured for use in making coir or magimagi
- Niuyabia – an uncommon tall palm, the fronds of which have distinctly drooping and clustered leaflets-yabia is the Fijian for arrowroot. Two of these palms are currently grown in Thurston Gardens, Suva.
- Niu yalewa (female coconut) - an uncommon and unusual tall coconut, the inflorescence being unbranched consisting of a single branch almost completely covered with female flowers, with only a small number of male flowers at the tip.
- Niu leka (short coconut) – group of dwarf or semi-tall palms which tend towards early bearing-variable coloured nuts, although mostly green.
- Niu ni malea (Malayan coconut) – a dwarf coconut first brought to Fiji in the 1920s
- Utogau or uta – A palm found in Rotuma, Cikobia and in Lau. The husk is edible when chewed and has a sweetish taste, not unlike sugar cane.

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(ii). Their uses for food and how to prepare that food

Coconut trees are a family of Palm Trees. The green coconuts are used to quench thirst and the white soft tissue is eaten by the Pacific people.

The matured coconuts are husked, scraped and squeezed to get the white juice. The white coconut juice is then used to boil fish and other green vegetables.

It can also be used for baking pies and bread. It gives a great taste.

A great dish that coconuts are used for is the ‘palusami’. Here is the recipe:

Recipe for Palusami

Ingredients:

- 10 coconuts, finely scraped and squeezed (salt added for taste but no water is added to the finely scraped coconut – the squeezed juice comes solely from the coconut itself)
- Dalo leaves
- Onions
- Aluminium foil

Method

1. Stack 5 dalo leaves together
2. Add onions to it
3. Pour a cup of squeezed coconut milk into the dalo leaves and wrapped it nicely with aluminium foil
4. Baked in the earth oven together with other foods for an hour.

Pacific people also make a special drink out of the very young green coconuts. It is called the ‘tody’. It is used as a replacement for sugar. It is also used as medicine to babies.

(iii). Other uses besides that of food.

Besides food. Palm leaves are used for traditional dancing fan. Palm trees are grown as decorative plants around compounds and other commercial places as in hotels to beautify surroundings.

Trunk of Palm trees are used for commercial products such as beds, chairs, lounge suites etc.