

Palms are considered by many to be the backbone of any exotic garden and as more varieties are finding their way into gardens all over the UK, protection is becoming more important - especially in colder areas. Some palms are fantastically hardy for instance *Trachycarpus fortunei* and *Trithinax campestris*. Others are really showing great resistance to our winters, especially in the south and in urban areas (*Phoenix canariensis* and *Butia capitata* to name but two). If you love palms and wish to grow some of the less hardy varieties, then give them a bit of a hand through the worst of the weather by following the guidelines below. As with many exotics, free-draining soil can be pivotal in cold resistance and frozen claggy soil can be a nightmare for palms. Add grit, sand and compost to heavy soils or mound up an area and plant on top - which will help with drainage and give you more height for your money!



1. As an example we are using *Phoenix canariensis* (Canary Island Date Palm) - a fantastic palm that is becoming much more popular due to its ease of winter protection and fast summer growth.

2. As with most palms, the growing point is the most important area to protect. To do this gather the leaves around the crown and for larger palms get someone to give you a hand.



3. Using strong twine tie all the palm leaves together. This will protect the centre from cold and wet as well as snow. The leaves can be pulled quite tight but watch out for the spikes!

4. In cold areas, covering the crown with straw will really boost the cold tolerance of the palm. Tie the straw in to avoid wind blowing it around your garden.





5. If the palm is on the tender side or the minimum temperature is low, then wrap the whole thing in frost protection fleece.

6. The palm is ready for the worst of the winter. If you don't like the snowman look you can wrap some heather screening around it or just add some eyes and a mouth! (The one on the right is Bruce and not one that we prepared earlier!)

