

King Sago Palm, *Cycas revoluta* **Emperor Sago Palm, *Cycas taitungensis***

Plant Description:

Though having a palm-like appearance, these plants are gymnosperms (cone bearing) while true palms are flowering plants. They belong to a group of plants known as cycads which grow naturally around the world in tropical and sub-tropical environments. These two are very similar in appearance and in their use in the landscape. They are long lived and slow growing perennials with thick crowns of many glossy, dark green leaves. The plants are dioecious meaning female and male cones are on separate plants.

Mature Size: 15 feet tall, 10-12 foot spread

Growth Rate: Slow (2-3 inches in height per year at best)

Plant Habit: *Cycas revoluta* may be single stemmed or multiple branched appearing shrub-like when young becoming more tree like with age. *Cycas taitungensis* is normally single trunked.

Plant Spacing: 4 – 6 feet when planted in groups

Ornamental Characteristics & Uses:

Foliage Color: Dark green and waxy, giving them an almost artificial look.

Flower Color: These plants produce cones instead of flowers. Female cones resemble a nest in the top of the stem and will bear many orange fruits at maturity. Male cones are elongated and may reach 18 inches or more in length.

Bloom Time: Cones are produced during the summer.

Attracts Wildlife: No, all parts of the plants, especially the seeds, are very toxic.

Uses: These plants make excellent free standing specimens or groupings with ornamental grasses or various types of ground covers. These plants also make excellent containerized patio specimens.

Growing Requirements:

Cold Hardiness Zone(s): 8 – 11

Hardy Temp: 10° F but leaves will burn in the 20s

Exposure: Full sun – Partial Shade

Water Needs: Low

Soil Tolerances: Tolerates a wide range of soil types but requires good drainage.

Soil pH: Acidic to Alkaline

Maintenance: Easy/Low

General Care & Growing Tips: When grown in full sun they will be more compact than when grown in shade but do equally well in both. Watch for magnesium and manganese deficiency symptoms. Use of “palm special” fertilizer will normally prevent problems. Prune annually to remove dead or discolored leaves.

Common Pests: Scale insects, especially Asian cycad scale, can cause serious problems. The most consistently effective treatment for controlling the cycad scale insect has been spraying them with oils, such as fish oil emulsion. Please contact your local Extension Office for more detailed management options.

References:

Northrop, R. J., Andreu, M. G., Friedman, M. H., McKenzie, M., and Quintana, H. V. (2010). *Cycas revoluta*, Sago Palm. University of Florida. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fr316>

Weissling, T. J., Howard, F. W., and Hamon, A. B. (1999). *Cycad Aulacaspis Scale*, *Aulacaspis yasumatsui* Takagi. University of Florida. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in253>