

# Cocos palm

*Syagrus romanzoffiana*



Cocos or Queen palm is native to Brazil, and is a fast growing, long lived and resilient palm traditionally grown in Queensland gardens. Cocos palm's many orange-yellow fruits are spread by flying foxes, and germinate easily in riparian areas and dry eucalypt forests. They are also known to germinate from commercially available mulch.

Planting of cocos palms is not recommended. There are a number of native palms including the Alexander palm which are good alternatives for the cocos palm, as well as being more visually appealing and not as messy. Existing cocos palms should be removed. If they cannot be removed, they should be managed so that their fruits are cut down when they are green, before they ripen.

## Legal requirements

Cocos or Queen palm is not a prohibited or restricted invasive plant under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*. However, by law, everyone has a general biosecurity obligation (GBO) to take reasonable and practical measures to minimise the biosecurity risks associated with invasive plants under their control.

Local governments must have a biosecurity plan that covers invasive plants in their area. This plan may include actions to be taken on cocos palm. Some of these actions may be required under local laws. Contact your local government for more information.



**Queensland**  
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## Description

Cocos palms are single-stemmed palms that grow up to 12 m high. Tall fronds up to 5 m long bear leaves with a green upper surface and greyish undersides.

The cocos palm is known for its bunches of orange-yellow fruits (each fruit is 2.5 cm in diameter), and often has an untidy appearance due to hanging dead fronds and fermenting dropped fruits.

## Control

Individual palms can be destroyed by cutting the crown off below the lowest frond. There is no need to treat the stump with herbicide, as it will not reshoot. In gardens and urban areas, it is more visually appealing to remove the palm at ground level rather than leave a stump; however, in bushland situations, there is only a need to cut the crown off below the lowest frond.

It is important to hand pull or chip any seedlings that come up around the base of the palm, and pick up any dropped fruits. When fruits are removed, ensure they are disposed of in sealed plastic bags.

When using herbicide treatment, do not allow spray drift onto susceptible crops and ornamentals and do not spray near desirable trees. Some trees and palms are extremely sensitive.

Cocos palms are very susceptible to the herbicide flupropanate, with the roots of the palm readily taking up the herbicide even at 2–3 m from point of application.

## More information

More information is available from your local government or visit [biosecurity.qld.gov.au](https://biosecurity.qld.gov.au).

