

Types of Palm Trees in California

Palms have been cultivated for centuries. The wood of the palm tree is very durable; its leaves, or fronds, are used for thatch for roofs in tropic regions and its fruit, either dates or coconuts is eaten for sustenance. There are 150 genera within the palm family. Palm trees found in California include the California fan palm, blue hesper palm and the date palm.

California Fan Palm

The California fan palm, also known as the California Washingtonia or the desert fan palm, is native to Palm Springs and south to the Mexican border. The palm grows to a height of 75 feet. The trunk is light-brown and broadens near the base, according to eNature. The leaves are fan shaped and divided into 70 lobes and attached to spine-edged stems. Dead leaves typically hang underneath the green leaves. Yellow flowers, up to 10 feet in length, bloom in the summer and in the fall, the dead flowers hang off the tree.

Blue Hesper Palm

The blue hesper palm is a slow-growing tree that reaches a height of 40 feet. The trunk is columnar, broadening near the base. The leaves are the bluest of any palm, according to “The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Trees of the Americas” by Tony Russell, Catherine Cutler and Martin Walters. Dead leaves routinely circle the trunk of the tree underneath the live leaves. The flowers are white and cluster along stems called inflorescences.

Date Palm

The date palm is a fruit tree is cultivated in hot, dry climates in California. The tree reaches a height of 98 feet. The trunk is columnar and covered with scales from old fronds. The younger leaves stand upright while the older leaves are arched toward the ground, according to the “Field Guide to the Trees of North America” by the National Geographic. The flowers are yellow and up to six feet in length and bloom in the spring, followed by purple-brown fruit.

e Nature: California Fan Palm

<http://www.enature.com/fieldguides/detail.asp?recnum=TS0140>

“The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Trees of the Americas”; Tony Russell, Catherine Cutler and Martin Walters; 2005

“Field Guide to the Trees of North America”; National Geographic; 2006