

# Small palms for power line-friendly landscaping



At Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), our most important responsibility is the safety of our customers and the communities we serve.

As part of that responsibility, we created this palm guide to help you select the right small palms when planting near power lines. Planting the right palm in the right place will help promote fire safety, reduce power outages and ensure beauty and pleasure for years to come.

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# Plan before you plant

## Proper tree and site selection

Always consider the size of the mature tree when planting where space is limited—near power lines, in narrow side yards or close to buildings.

Small tree types are the right choice, particularly if you're planting palms. Unlike other trees, palm growth cannot be directed away from power lines. Instead, palms must be "topped" or removed to comply with safety clearance standards. Palm fronds can also cause power outages and create a fire hazard when strong winds carry them long distances.

## Planting with fire safety in mind

You can help reduce wildfire risks by choosing the right plants, trees and shrubs and by following vegetation and fire safety standards that require greater clearances between trees, limbs and power lines.

### A Planting outside of high fire-threat areas

Planting restrictions for trees and other vegetation vary widely for different types of utility power lines—electric transmission, electric distribution and gas pipelines. Please consider the following when planting near:



**Distribution power lines:** Select only small palm species that will not grow taller than 25 feet at maturity. (See next page for examples.) Any palms that can grow taller than 25 feet at maturity should be planted at least 50 feet away from these power lines.



**Transmission power lines:** Plant only low-growing shrubs under the wire zone and only grasses within the area directly below the tower. Along the border of the transmission line right-of-way, plant only small trees that cannot grow taller than 10 feet.

### B Planting within high fire-threat areas

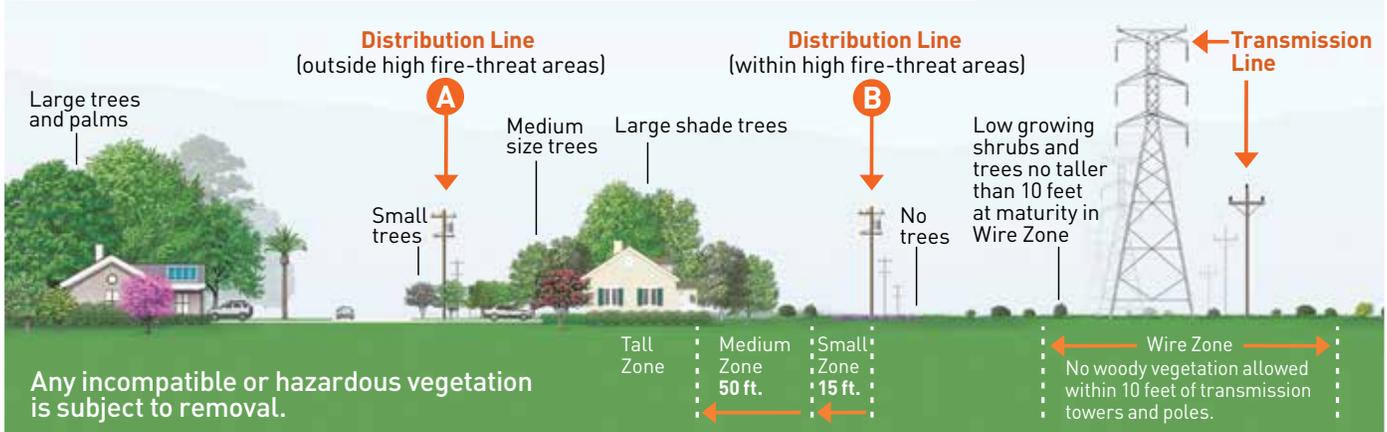
You play a vital role to ensure that the right palm is safely planted in the right place. This planting guide will help you select a type of palm and appropriate planting location that is compatible with our safety clearances.

**Small zone:** Within 15 feet of the wires on the pole, plant only low-growing plants less than 12 inches at maturity that have high moisture, and low sap or resin content.

**Medium zone:** From 15 to 50 feet of the wires on the pole, plant trees that reach no taller than 40 feet at maturity.

**Tall zone:** At least 50 feet away from the wires on the pole, you may plant trees that grow taller than 40 feet at maturity.

## Avoid Conflicts with Power Lines—Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place



# Key characteristics of recommended small palms



## Cliff Indian Date

*Phoenix rupicola*, India

Very graceful palm with soft semitranslucent, lime green foliage. Dramatic vertical frond arrangement. Dazzling when backlit by sunlight.

**Mature height: 25 feet. Zones\* 9, 15-17, 19-24.**



## Jelly

*Butia capitata*, Argentina

Very hardy. Edible fruit tastes like pineapple. Arching silvery foliage. Especially dramatic when lit at night.

**Mature height: 25 feet. Zones 7-24.**



## Guadalupe Island

*Brahea edulis*, Mexico

Native to tiny Guadalupe Island, 250 miles southwest of San Diego. Very adapted to California conditions. Gorgeous large fronds.

**Mature height: 25 feet. Zones 8-24.**



## Lady

*Rhapis excelsa*, China

Dark green foliage. Grows in a clump with multiple stems. Requires shade inland. Great for narrow spaces and for tropical gardens.

**Mature height: 12 feet. Zones 8, 9, 12-17, 19-24.**

\*Refer to the *Sunset Western Garden Book* map to find your planting zone.

## Key characteristics of recommended small palms



### Leatherleaf Palmetto

*Sabal Louisiana*, Louisiana

Extremely hardy with bold, large and leathery foliage and small edible seeds that taste like dates when fully ripe.

**Mature height: 15 feet. Zones 8–24.**



### Manambe

*Dypsis decipiens*, Madagascar

Dramatic palm with bulging bottle-like trunk and very tough arching, lime green foliage. Tree will often split and grow with a double trunk.

**Mature height: 25 feet. Zones 8–9, 12–24.**



### Mediterranean Fan

*Chamaerops humilis*, Europe

Natural growth habit is as a bush with multiple trunks. Can be trained into a solitary or artistic, multiheaded tree. Extremely wind tolerant.

**Mature height: 15 feet. Zones 4–24.**



### Pygmy x Canary Hybrid

*Phoenix roebelenii* x *canariensis*, Man-made

A perfect palm for many applications. Like a Canary palm but one-third the size and with more tropical, softer foliage. Dense canopy.

**Mature height: 25 feet. Zones 8–9, 14–24.**

# Key characteristics of recommended small palms



## Pygmy Date

*Phoenix roebelenii*, Vietnam

Lush, tropical, dark green foliage. Often grown as a plant with multiple trunks. Foliage damaged at 26 degrees but recovers rapidly.

**Mature height: 12 feet. Zones 9, 15–17, 19–24.**



## Pygmy x Senegal Hybrid

*Phoenix roebelenii* x *reclinata*, Man-made

Like *Phoenix reclinata* but half the size with softer, more tropical looking foliage. Naturally grows with multiple trunks but can be trained as a single trunk.

**Mature height: 25 feet. Zones 9, 15–24.**



## Radical

*Chamaedorea radicalis*, Mexico

Tall variety becomes trunking to 15 feet. Green trunk is bamboolike. Needs shade in hottest of climates. Undemanding and frost tolerant.

**Mature height: 15 feet. Zones 8–9, 12–24.**



## Shaving Brush

*Rhopalostylis sapida*, New Zealand

Tropical looking palm with a dramatically large crownshaft between the trunk and the leaves at maturity. Upright foliage. Effective in narrow areas. Needs shade inland.

**Mature height: 25 feet. Zones 15–17, 23–24.**

# Palmlike trees



## Cabbage Tree

*Cordyline australis*, New Zealand

Well adapted, semiwoody, branching tree with straplike foliage. Look for colored varieties such as “Red Sensation” and “Pink Stripe.”

**Mature height: 25 feet. Zones 8–11, 14–24.**



## Dragon Tree

*Dracaena draco*, Canary Islands

Dramatic architectural plant with muscular-looking trunk sections. Wind and salt tolerant. Low branching multi or high branching standard.

**Mature height: 20 feet. Zones 16, 17, 21–24.**



## Sago Palm

*Cycas revoluta*, Japan

Dark green foliage. Ample lateral space suggested as frond tips have small thorns. Prehistoric looking and low maintenance.

**Mature height: 12 feet. Zones 8–24.**



## Tasmanian Tree Fern

*Dicksonia antarctica*, Australia

Soft, lime green foliage. Prehistoric looking. Requires shade inland. Thrives with ample moisture and is the most cold hardy tree fern.

**Mature height: 15 feet. Zones 8–9, 14–17, 19–24.**



## Variegated Yucca

*Yucca elephantipes* 'marginata,' Mexico

Multibranching tree with dark green straplike foliage with bright yellow, semitranslucent margins that glow when backlit by the sun.

**Mature height: 20 feet. Zones 8–24.**

## Safety tips for planting:



### Mind the lines above

Always look up before planting or pruning trees and stay 10 feet or more away from power lines. If you see a downed power line, stay away and **call 911**.

[pge.com/mindthelines](http://pge.com/mindthelines)

### Know what's below

To remain safe while planting trees, shrubs or flowers, **call 811 at least two days before digging**. Workers will visit your property free of charge to mark the location of gas lines or other underground utilities so you can avoid them.



## Key characteristics of recommended palmlike trees

The following is a guide to small palms suitable near distribution power lines only in areas that are not at high risk for wildfire. Work with your local nursery to identify other suitable plants for your specific planting zone.

Common/Scientific name	Frond type	Height	Width	Trunk	Growth	Water use*
<b>Cliff Indian Date Palm</b> <i>Phoenix rupicola</i>	Feather	25 feet	12 feet	Solitary	Slow	Moderate
<b>Guadalupe Island Palm</b> <i>Brahea edulis</i>	Fan	25 feet	15 feet	Solitary	Medium	Low
<b>Jelly Palm</b> <i>Butia capitata</i>	Feather	25 feet	12 feet	Solitary	Medium	Low
<b>Lady Palm</b> <i>Rhapis excelsa</i>	Fan	12 feet	10 feet	Clustering	Slow	Moderate
<b>Leatherleaf Palmetto</b> <i>Sabal Louisiana</i>	Fan	15 feet	9 feet	Solitary	Medium	Low
<b>Manambe Palm</b> <i>Dypsis decipiens</i>	Feather	25 feet	15 feet	Solitary	Slow	Low
<b>Mediterranean Fan Palm</b> <i>Chamaerops humilis</i>	Fan	15 feet	15 feet	Multi	Slow	Low
<b>Pygmy x Canary Hybrid</b> <i>Phoenix roebelenii</i> x <i>canariensis</i>	Feather	25 feet	14 feet	Solitary	Fast	Low
<b>Pygmy Date Palm</b> <i>Phoenix roebelenii</i>	Feather	12 feet	7 feet	Solitary	Slow	Moderate
<b>Pygmy x Senegal Hybrid</b> <i>Phoenix roebelenii</i> x <i>reclinata</i>	Feather	25 feet	18 feet	Multi	Medium	Low
<b>Radical Palm</b> <i>Chamaedorea radicalis</i>	Feather	15 feet	4 feet	Solitary	Fast	Moderate
<b>Shaving Brush Palm</b> <i>Rhopalostylis sapida</i>	Feather	25 feet	10 feet	Solitary	Slow	Moderate

Palmlike trees						
<b>Cabbage Tree</b> <i>Cordyline australis</i>	Strap	25 feet	12 feet	Branching	Fast	Low
<b>Dragon Tree</b> <i>Dracaena draco</i>	Strap	20 feet	15 feet	Solitary	Slow	Low
<b>Sago Palm</b> <i>Cycas revoluta</i>	Feather	12 feet	6 feet	Multi	Slow	Low
<b>Tasmanian Tree Fern</b> <i>Dicksonia antarctica</i>	Feather	15 feet	10 feet	Solitary	Slow	Heavy
<b>Variegated Yucca</b> <i>Yucca elephantipes</i> 'marginata'	Strap	20 feet	15 feet	Branching	Medium	Low

\*Note: Most plants listed in this guide are drought tolerant and require little additional water once established. However, supplying ample water when trees are young will lead to a faster growing, more vigorous and longer lasting plant.

# Keeping the lights on and your community safe

At PG&E our most important responsibility is the safety of our customers and the communities we serve. We know how much trees mean to our communities, and we are committed to helping you ensure the right trees are located in the right places to help reduce wildfire risks and improve public safety.

Every year, we inspect each segment of **approximately 100,000 miles** of overhead power lines, with some locations patrolled multiple times a year. We prune or remove **1.4 million trees annually** and work to address dead and dying trees in areas affected by drought.

By planting the right tree in the right place, you can help reduce fire hazards, promote safety and reduce the risk of damage to properties and power lines.

For more information regarding tree planting near power lines or gas pipelines and to download a copy of this booklet, please visit: [pge.com/righttreerightplace](https://pge.com/righttreerightplace).

To verify the type of utility line near you, schedule an appointment with our tree care professionals or request gas pipeline planting information, please call **1-800-743-5000**.

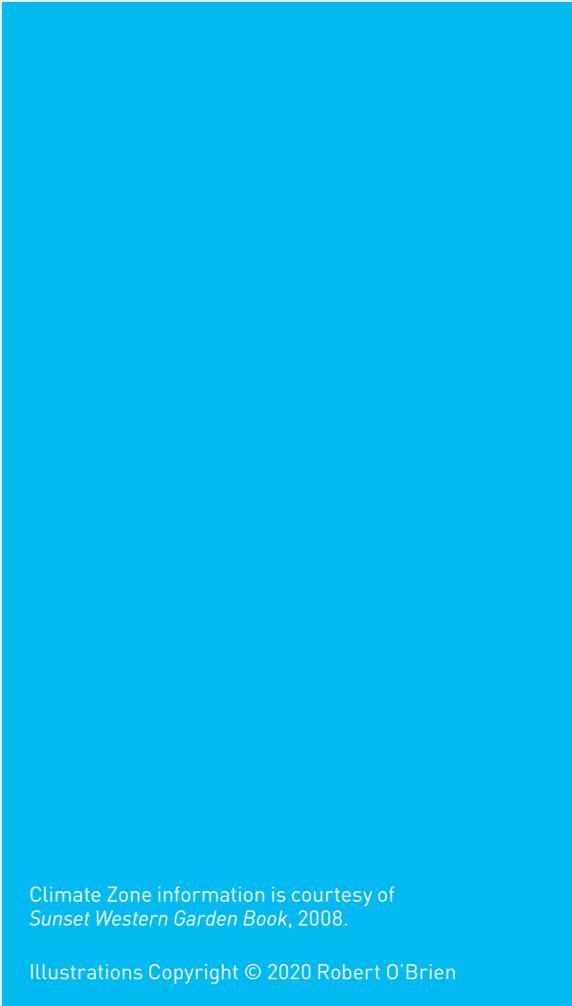
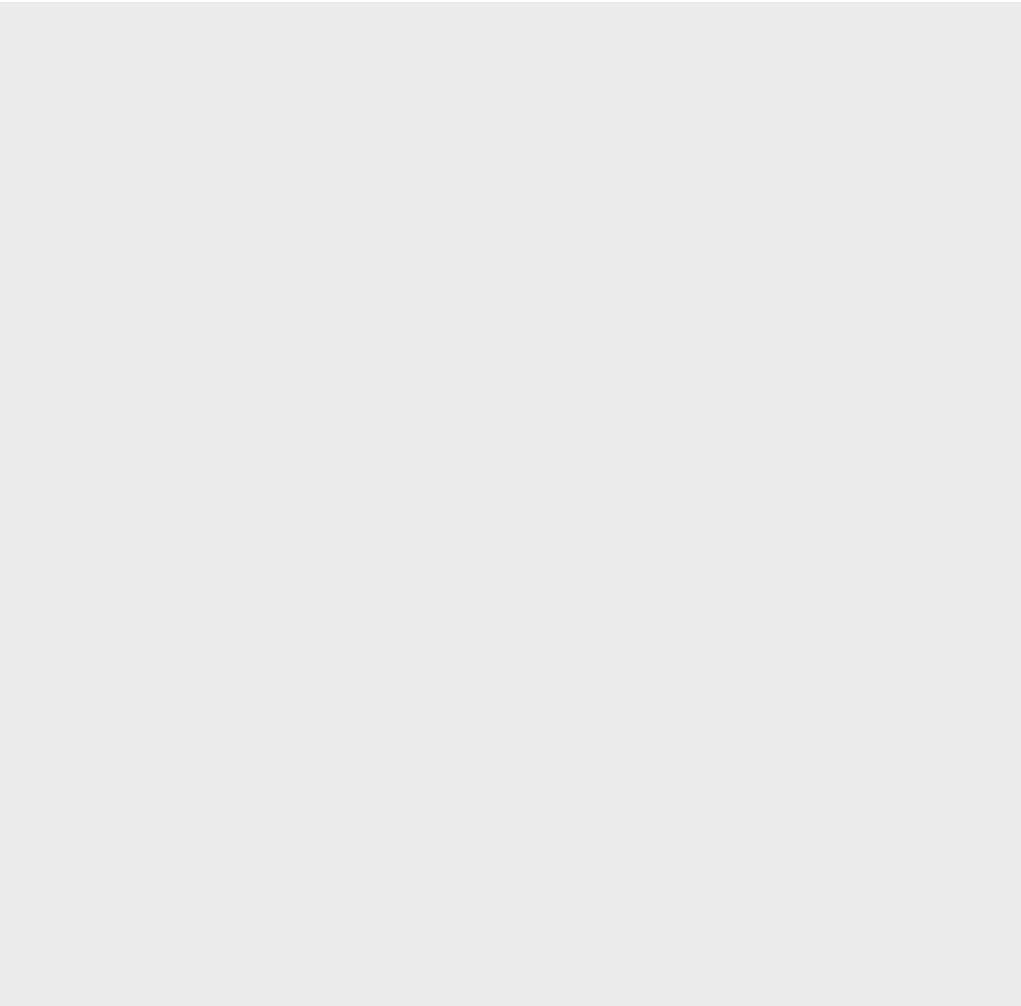
### **Additional references and resources:**

PG&E Vegetation Management Program:  
[pge.com/trees](https://pge.com/trees)

Planting the right tree in the right place:  
[arborday.org/trees/righttreeandplace](https://arborday.org/trees/righttreeandplace)

High Fire-Threat District Map:  
[cpuc\\_firemap2.sig-gis.com](https://cpuc_firemap2.sig-gis.com)

California Tree Selections:  
[selecttree.calpoly.edu](https://selecttree.calpoly.edu)



Climate Zone information is courtesy of  
*Sunset Western Garden Book*, 2008.

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