

# *Cycas circinalis* Queen Sago<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

The palm-like queen sago has a short, dark brown, unbranching trunk topped with graceful, arching, medium green, feathery leaves, 6 to 8 feet long (Fig. 1). Although slow-growing, queen sago is much prized for its light-textured tropical effect and easy care and makes an excellent lawn specimen or container plant for large areas. It is usually located as a specimen where it can be viewed from all sides but could be mass planted on 8 to 19 foot centers on a large scale industrial or commercial landscape. Many people plant it too close to a building, window or walkway and, unfortunately, need to remove leaves to allow for clearance.



Figure 1. Queen sago.

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Cycas circinalis*

**Pronunciation:** SYE-kus sur-sin-NAL-liss

**Common name(s):** queen sago

**Family:** *Cycadaceae*

**Plant type:** shrub

**USDA hardiness zones:** 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** border; accent; suitable for growing indoors

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## Description

**Height:** 6 to 15 feet

**Spread:** 8 to 12 feet

**Plant habit:** palm

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** fine

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## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** spiral  
**Leaf type:** even-pinnately compound  
**Leaf margin:** entire  
**Leaf shape:** lanceolate  
**Leaf venation:** none, or difficult to see  
**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen  
**Leaf blade length:** 8 to 12 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** no fall color change  
**Fall characteristic:** not showy



Figure 3. Foliage of queen sago.

## Flower

**Flower color:** no flowers  
**Flower characteristic:** no flowers

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** elongated  
**Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches  
**Fruit cover:** dry or hard  
**Fruit color:** brown  
**Fruit characteristic:** showy

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** can be trained to grow with a short, single trunk; usually with one stem/trunk; showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems  
**Current year stem/twig color:** not applicable  
**Current year stem/twig thickness:** not applicable

## Culture

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun  
**Soil tolerances:** slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam  
**Drought tolerance:** high  
**Soil salt tolerances:** poor  
**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

## Other

**Roots:** usually not a problem  
**Winter interest:** no special winter interest  
**Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more  
**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive  
**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

## Use and Management

When given sufficient room to spread, queen sago performs very well in shade or full sun and needs only occasional watering once established. It is too large for many small landscapes. King sago would be a good substitute in a small residential landscape.

Plants are usually propagated by seed but can also be started by division of suckers.

## Pests and Diseases

Scale can be a minor problem. Thrips can disfigure foliage.

Leaf-spotting diseases usually cause only minor problems.