

Environmental Weed Alert.



Cocos Palm or Queen Palm

Syagrus romanzoffianum / *Arecastrum romanzoffiana*

Description: The Cocos Palm also known, as the Queen Palm is native to Brazil in South America. It is fast growing, long-lived and resilient in the NSW northern rivers area and has been extensively used for landscaping. The Cocos Palm has been classified as an invasive environmental weed and should be removed. It can grow to 21m in height. They have single stemmed and ridged trunks with tall fronds up to 5m long. The frond leaflets stretching from the central leaf stem are more strappy and narrower than the local Bangalow Palm, which they can be confused with as juveniles. The leaflets have a green upper surface and greyish underside. They produce large clusters of green fruits turning to orange/yellow, each 2.5cm in diameter. It is these fruits that are readily spread by flying foxes, birds, humans and gravity invading local riverside areas, bushlands and wetlands. The seeds also germinate easily from commercial and recreational mulch piles sometimes by their hundreds. The Cocos Palm often has an untidy appearance with hanging dead fronds and fermenting dropped fruits. Some native palm alternatives include the Bangalow Palm (*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*), Cabbage Tree Palm (*Livistona australis*) and the Walking Stick Palm (*Linospadix monostachyus*).

Control: Existing Cocos Palms should be removed and replaced with appropriate local natives. Herbicide is not required for removing seedlings and mature palms, as they will not regrow if removed correctly. For seedlings hand pull out or chip the crown out. For large palms, chainsaw at ground level to avoid leaving a stump. In bushland settings, cutting the crown off below the lowest frond will do. If leaving the Cocos Palm in place, they should be managed by cutting off their fruits while green and before they can spread as weeds. Dense seedlings from germinated fruits on the ground can be foliar sprayed with a registered herbicide. Remember to read and adhere to the herbicide label and instructions at all times.