

Coconut Palm

Scientific Name: *Cocos nucifera* **Irish Name:** Pailm chnó cóc



Coconut palms can live for up to 100 years, producing an average of average of 100 coconuts per year during its most productive years.

Coconut Palms and tropical beaches often go together. Though they are referred to as palm “trees”, in the botanical world they are not considered trees at all—they are large plants. Their fruit, the coconut, is an extremely versatile fruit and, along with other parts of the plant, has hundreds of different uses.

Coconut palms are found in tropical areas around the world, along sandy shorelines. The buoyance of the fruit means it can travel great distances by water, washing up on shores and establishing itself. It is a self-contained seed germinator, have all it requires within itself to produce a plant. Once it finds a free-draining soil, warm temperatures and sufficient rain, it will grow, producing fibrous roots that grow outwards from the plan and remain near the surface. Only a few roots grow downwards to help anchor the plant.



A Coconut Palm germinating on the Punaluu Black Sand Beach, island of Hawai'i.

A few of the different uses for coconut:

Coconut is grown as a crop in more than 93 countries of the world. The main commercial growers are in India, Indonesia and the Philippines. Harvesting the coconuts is done by skilled climbers or from the ground using a knife attached to a long pole. Not only is coconut eaten for its many health benefits, the whole plant has a wide variety of uses. Some of these are listed below.



Outer layer: produces coir, a natural flexible fibre for making floor mats, brushes, ropes, stuffing mattresses, etc..

Shell and Fibrous husk: pot for plants, bowls and utensils for food, musical instruments, fuel.

Flesh:

coconut oil, coconut milk, coconut and palm sugar, dried coconut for baking. The dried flesh is known as “copra” and it is from this that coconut oil is extracted. Coconut oil has many uses, including soap, cosmetics, and cooking.

Water: as a drink, for a making wine and vinegar. Mixed with the flesh to make coconut milk.

Coconut palm leaves: for roofing, kindling, making baskets and mats.

Coconut palm trunk: for making furniture and houses.

Coconut palm roots: as a dye, a mouthwash and medicinal purposes.



Coconuts

Coconuts are known as drupes. They have a fleshy fruit with thin skin and a central stone containing the seed.

