

HORTICULTURE REPORT – FEBRUARY 2023

PONYTAIL PALM

A graceful and long-lived houseplant that will add many years of beauty and charm to your home is the beaucarnea recurvata commonly known as the ponytail palm.

This low maintenance house plant has individual leaves that look like a pony's tail, hence the name. It requires very little care or maintenance to provide thick and somewhat scratchy foliage that will grow to over six feet tall and last twenty to forty years or more indoors.

Because it is called a palm it requires very little water. Especially during the winter months.



However, even though it is called a “palm” it is actually better related to desert plants such as the yucca and agave. It is native to Mexico but does exceptionally well as an indoor plant in New England. Just keep it near a window for lots of light but not so near that its leaves touch the glass. Too much sun exposure will also scorch the leaves so beware of too much direct sunlight.

The plant's large domed stump leads upwards forming a thin narrow stem from which foliage of long thin ponytail stems cascade outwards and downwards like a waterfall. Its graceful shape is part of its beauty and charm.

To pot or repot use a fast-draining cacti or succulent potting soil in a clay pot. As an alternative you can mix your own soil using one third each, potting soil, perlite, and sand. Either choice will provide what your pony tail palm requires.

Water sporadically from Spring to Fall but always allow the top two inches to dry completely before watering again. Then in Winter only water as needed...very infrequently.

Fertilize in the Spring with a cacti/succulent food fertilizer. Follow these steps and your ponytail palm will give you many years of pleasure.

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