

Manila Palm Care Card

Adonidia merrillii · Christmas palm

Ka'ala Lush Nursery

Grown with aloha · Wai'anae, O'ahu

Quick answer: The Manila palm (*Adonidia merrillii*), also called the Christmas palm for its bright red winter fruit, is a compact, self-cleaning palm that tops out around 15–25 feet — perfect for small yards. Give it full sun to light shade, well-draining soil, regular water its first year, and a proper palm fertilizer with magnesium and potassium two or three times a year.

Light	Full sun to light shade	Size	15–25 ft — one of the best small-yard palms
Water	Regular the first year; moderate after establishment	Signature	Clusters of bright red fruit around the holidays
Soil	Well-draining; tolerates sand and rocky soil	Maintenance	Self-cleaning — old fronds drop on their own
Feeding	Palm-special fertilizer (with Mg & K) 2–3x per year	Best spot in Hawaii	Entryways, courtyards, pots, tight side yards

Care essentials

Why is the Manila palm a great palm for small yards? Most palms outgrow residential yards; the Manila palm doesn't. It matures at roughly 15–25 feet with a slim gray trunk and a neat crown of arching fronds, so it fits under many utility lines and beside driveways without becoming a monster.

How much sun and water does a Manila palm need? Manila palms grow fastest in full sun but tolerate light shade, where they simply grow slower and hold a slightly deeper green. Water a new palm deeply two or three times a week for its first several months — palms establish on consistent moisture — then taper to a deep weekly soak, and...

What fertilizer do palms need in Hawaii? Use a palm-special fertilizer — one labeled with magnesium (Mg), potassium (K), and manganese in addition to N-P-K, commonly something like 8-2-12 +4Mg. Hawaii's rainy, sandy, and volcanic soils leach these nutrients, and palms show deficiencies loudly: yellow-banded older fronds signal...

How do you plant a Manila palm? Dig a hole twice the width of the root ball and exactly as deep — planting a palm too deep is a slow death sentence. Set it so the base of the trunk sits at or slightly above grade, backfill with the native soil (no need for rich amendments), water in thoroughly, and mulch a wide ring keeping...

What problems affect Manila palms? In Hawaii, remarkably few. The species is famously susceptible to lethal yellowing disease in Florida, but that disease is not established in Hawaii, which is part of why *Adonidia* is such a dependable choice here.

Quick FAQ

- **How tall does a Manila palm get?** Typically 15–25 feet at maturity — much smaller than coconut or royal palms, which is why it's a favorite for residential yards, courtyards, and large pots.
- **Why is it called a Christmas palm?** Because its green fruit ripens brilliant red in clusters right around December, decorating the palm like ornaments.
- **Can Manila palms grow in pots?** Yes — they're one of the better palms for large containers thanks to their compact size and slow-ish growth. Use a big pot with fast-draining mix and feed with palm fertilizer.

kaalalush.com/guides — free full guides, updated with what works in Hawai'i

Plants by appointment in Wai'anae, O'ahu — email kaalalush@gmail.com to arrange a pickup

Just a little 'ohana nursery — mahalo for growing with us!