

BIOBINGO: AUCKLAND PLANTS

While you're out and about in your neighbourhood, see if you can spot these plants commonly found around Tāmaki Makaurau. Two of the plants below aren't native to Aotearoa, can you tell which ones?



Tāmaki
Paenga Hira
Auckland
War Memorial
Museum



Karaka



Kawakawa



Kōwhai



Bangalow palm



Nīkau palm



Queen palm

IDENTIFYING PALMS

During the Level 4 lockdown in August 2021 Botany Collection Manager Dhahara was participating in Erin Forsyth's plant scavenger hunt when she realised that some people were misidentifying the native nīkau palm for other common exotic palms in Auckland such as the Bangalow and Queen palms.

How can you tell the difference between them?

Nīkau palms (*Rhopalostylis sapida*) generally have more straight upright leaves, a lime green swollen crownshaft (the leaf sheath which wraps around the upper trunk). Nīkau are slow growing. They have a green trunk with green leaf scars and bright red fruit.

Bangalow palms (*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*), have arching leaves, a green slender crownshaft, a grey trunk and they also have red fruit. They are a fast-growing Australian palm that is widely planted in Auckland. Bangalow palms are now considered a pest plant as they have the potential to invade native forests and displace nīkau.

Queen palms (*Syagrus romanzoffiana*), have multi-layered arching leaves with drooping leaf tips, and an undefined or no crownshaft. They have a smooth grey trunk and large orange fruit when ripe. Queen palms are also fast growing and are native to south America.

Images: Puriri, Pohutukawa, Kauri, Mānuka and Nīkau palm by Jacqui Geux. Cabbage tree, Kawakawa, Kōwhai and Bangalow palm by D. Ranatunga. Karaka by Ewen Cameron. Queen palm by Jane Groufsky



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