

Sago Palm Danger

By: Melinda Sperl

Sago Palms have been a popular plant for years but, in reality, they are not even a true palm. These plants are in the Cycad family, or properly named: *Cycas Revoluta*. There are many differences between actual palms and the Sago Palm, the most important of which is that they are poisonous.

Landscapers are often asked to eliminate poisonous plants in a landscape because of children or pets or to make the yard organic, etc., but time and again, the owners want to keep their existing sago palm. While many other plants may make children or pets sick, the sago is one of the most seen plant emergencies at veterinary hospitals.

Sago Palms contain cycasin, which causes severe liver damage when ingested. Most adults would not be tempted to ingest yard plants, but even being pricked by their sharp tips can cause a small amount of poison to be injected and that may cause infection. Eyes are particularly vulnerable to sago palms as the tips are very sharp and the palms are at eye level to children and pets.

The female plant is particularly dangerous as it fruits it produces small "ball sized" fruit that can be mistaken for balls that attracts dogs, cats and children. We had a good friend recently that almost lost their dog due to chewing on their plants fruit right in front of them as they unwittingly watched. Luckily the dog survived but may have lasting damage. The plants were quickly removed!

If you have this plant in your yard, always supervise children & pets when around it as it is a very dangerous plant. And if you have the female sago, remove the seeds before they fall to the ground.

Happy Gardening!

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