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**23.** © **The desert fan palm** *Washingtonia filifera*. Purcell, J. Native Plants Journal 13(3):184-188. 2012.

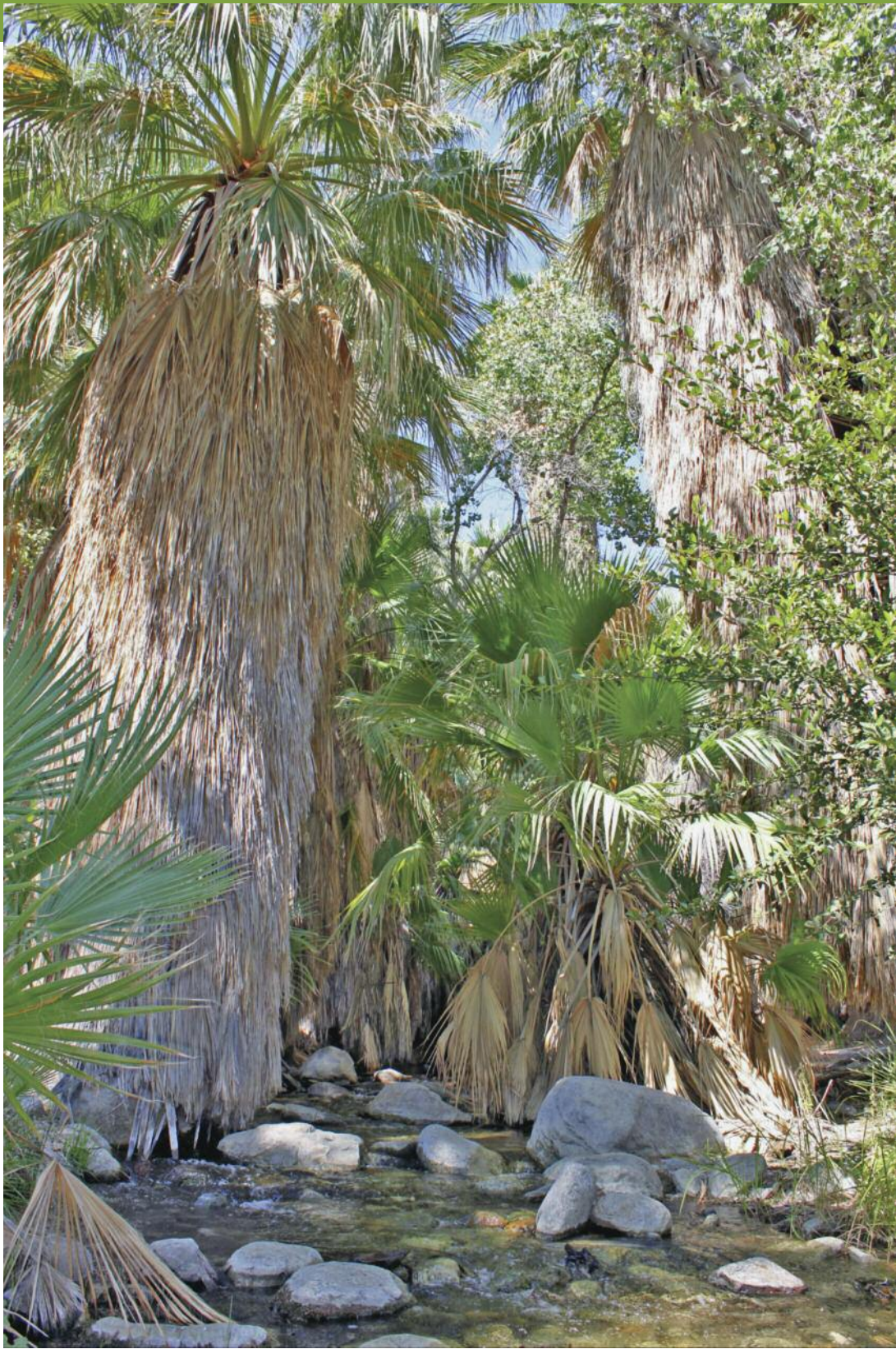


Figure 1. Stately desert fan palms (*Washingtonia filifera* (Linden ex André) H. Wendl.). Photo by Tara Luna

# The desert fan palm

## *Washingtonia filifera*

Jennifer Purcell

### ABSTRACT

In this article, the author discusses the cultural history and propagation of the desert fan palm, *Washingtonia filifera* (Linden ex André) H. Wendl. (Arecaceae), along with the ecology of a palm oasis.

Purcell J. 2012. The desert fan palm: *Washingtonia filifera*. *Native Plants Journal* 13(3):184–188.

### KEY WORDS

Arecaceae, propagation, natural history, seeds, oases

### NOMENCLATURE

Plants: USDA NRCS (2012)

Animals: ITIS (2012)

Of the more than 2600 species of palms in the world, the most majestic and beautiful is the desert fan palm, *Washingtonia filifera* (Linden ex André) H. Wendl. (Arecaceae) (Figure 1). Other common names for this palm tree are California fan palm, because of its fan-shaped (palmate) leaves, and petticoat palm, because its annual rosettes of dead fronds remain to create a “skirt” or “petticoat” around the trunk of the tree. This monocot offers more than just good looks. As a member of the palm family, Arecaceae, it also has an intriguing and generous natural history.