

Cycads

Cycads, family Cycadaceae, are found in South and Central America, Australia, Japan, China, India, Madagascar and southern and tropical Africa in tropical, sub-tropical and warm temperate areas. Some are able to survive in harsh semi-desert climates and can grow in sand or even on rock. There are 305 described species worldwide. Cycads have a resemblance to palms and ferns. They are gymnosperms and have large pineapple like cones that protrude from the top of the stem and contain fleshy seeds.

Cycads are considered living fossils because fossils of cycads date back to the early Permian Period, 280 million years ago. They were abundant and widespread during the Mesozoic Era, 65 to 225 million years ago, and the fossil record indicates that cycads have undergone relatively little change in the last 100 million years.

