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Palms

Out on a Limb: Tree Care Tips for the Tampa Bay Region

Quote

“Pruning is a ‘double – edged sword’ either helping or hindering the development of a strong tree structure.”

Tree Care Tip #1: Pruning Palms

Palms are regularly pruned to keep them attractive and safe. Dead fronds are not detrimental to the health of the tree. Many palms need to maintain a set number of live fronds to remain healthy.

If possible do not to remove live fronds. All live fronds store nutrients (see next article) critical for the long-term health of the palm. If you must prune, avoid removing even partially green live fronds that are growing horizontally or growing upward.

Fronds removed should be severed close to the base of the frond without damaging living trunk tissue. There is little reason to shave or sand the trunk smooth. Dead fronds can be removed with a small chain saw. A hand saw can be used to cut developing flower and fruit stalks that emerge between live fronds, so you do not injure the surrounding fronds.



No pruning needed on these Cabbage palms

*Read more about what
UF scientists have to say
about Pruning Palms*

[Pruning Palms](#)

Tree Care Tip #2: Fertilizing Palms

Ever wonder why your palms don't look so well. Most palms in Florida need to be supplemented with an appropriate fertilizer.

The fertilizers typically applied to turfgrass are not suitable for palms. Potassium (K) deficiency is a common disorder of palms in Florida. Turf type fertilizers have been shown to kill palms by exacerbating their deficiency in potassium.

Palm nutritional requirements are higher than those for other types of plants. A fertilizer that is suitable for palms (see below) will be more than suitable for trees, shrubs, and herbaceous ornamentals, fruit trees, and even turfgrass growing in the same location.

Recommendation: Look for a 8-2-12 + 4% kieserite magnesium, slow release fertilizer, with 1-2% Fe and Mn, plus trace amounts of Zn, Cu, and B. This is the fertilizer blend recommended by University of Florida palm expert, Dr. Tim Broschat.

'The only way to ensure that you will be getting an effective fertilizer is to specify that 100% of the N, K, Mg, and B sources are slow release and that the Mn, Fe, and other micronutrients are present in sulfate or chelated form.'

How you apply a fertilizer can also determine whether the application will be effective or not. Fertilizer should be uniformly spread throughout the entire ornamental planting area (or at least the entire palm canopy area) at a rate of 1.5 lbs./100 sq. ft. 4 times per year. Since roots of ornamental groundcovers, shrubs, or trees are often intermingled with those of palms in the landscape and share the same soil conditions, these other ornamental plants will also benefit from this fertilization method.

If you use a landscape maintenance company, show them this article and ask them if they follow these suggested practices by the University of Florida.

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about Pruning Palms*

[Palm Fertilizers](#)



Please send in your questions and I will answer them via email or in upcoming issues of this newsletter.

Send your favorite tree picture and I will try to use it in the newsletter.

The May 19th
‘Trees and Hurricanes’
Webinar was recorded
and is now online at:

<https://youtu.be/U7VsKQjEAUU>

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