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**Palm Care & Maintenance**

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## 1. Pruning

a. Not all palms require pruning—properly fertilized palms with crownshafts and some species without them should never require pruning.

b. Pruning impacts:
1. can reduce palm vigor and palm nutritional health
2. can transmit diseases such as Fusarium wilt
3. can reduce habitat for vermin
4. can reduce cold hardiness and wind tolerance

c. What to trim?
1. dead leaves and fruit stalks
2. badly damaged living leaves, unless they are they only leaves remaining on the palm
3. living flower and fruit stalks

d. How much to remove?
1. if nutrient deficiencies exist, never remove any leaves that are not completely dead (completely brown).
2. if no deficiencies exist and palm has a full canopy green right down to the bottom, remove no more healthy leaves than will be produced during the interval between prunings—and preferably less!
3. **never** remove any living leaves originating above the horizontal (9:00 to 3:00 o'clock position)

e. How to remove leaves?
1. cut leaf bases close, but not into the trunk
2. when trimming Canary Island date palms, disinfect tools between trees
3. do not attempt to pull off leaves that will not come off easily. This can result in trunk wounds that serve as entry points for diseases such as Thielaviopsis.
4. never use climbing spikes on palm trunks.

## 2. Fertilization

a. In Pinellas County only **use 8-0-12+4Mg plus micronutrients** palm maintenance fertilizer (Feb., May, Nov.). **During the summer nitrogen/phosphorus ban use a 0-0-16+6Mg with micronutrients** (Aug.). 100% of N, K, and Mg should be in controlled release form and micronutrients should be in sulfate or chelate (Fe only) form (see list of recommended sources

below). Should contain about 1.5-2% Mn and Fe (0.1-0.2% is sufficient for Fe if chelated), plus trace amounts of B (0.15%), Zn (0.15%), and Cu (0.05%).

**Recommended elemental sources for blended fertilizers:**

**N** -- Any controlled release N source with 2 to 3 month release. Ammoniacal (or urea) N is generally preferred over nitrate, although a mixture of the two forms is OK

**P** – P sources should be water-soluble. If uncoated, should be a superphosphate, but coated ammonium or potassium phosphates are also suitable.

**K** – Sulfur- coated potassium sulfate; Resin-coated potassium sources can be used in longer-term products, but should not be used in 3-month products.

**Mg** –Prilled (gran) kieserite is excellent. Resin-coated prilled kieserite, or resin-coated potassium magnesium sulfate are suitable only for longer-term forumulations and may not release quickly enough to be effective.

**Fe** – Trachelene Fe is best for blending, [Sequestrene 138 (FeEDDHA) is an excellent Fe source, but is unsuitable for blending in granular fertilizers]. Sequestrene 330 (FeDTPA) is the most effective source for foliar fertilization

**Mn** – Manganese sulfate

**Zn** – Zinc sulfate

**Cu** – Copper sulfate

**B** – Granubor is excellent for 3-6 month products while Frits B32G is good for a year.

**Recommended application rate: Up to** 15 pounds of product (not N!) per 1000 sq. ft. of landscape area (or tree canopy area) 4 times per year for south Florida. Lower rates and/or 3 applications per year may be adequate for central Florida.

**Recommended application method:** Broadcast the fertilizer using a properly calibrated rotary spreader to the area under the canopy, the entire mulched bed area, or entire landscape including the lawn.

**Recommendations for mixed landscapes:** Any **lawn** to be fertilized within 50 ft. of a palm should only be given the above landscape fertilizer, **not a high N turf fertilizer! High N:K ratio fertilizers can induce severe to fatal K and Mg deficiencies in palms if applied anywhere near palms.**

**For more details see http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/EP261 and http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/EP273**

This recommended fertilizer can be found locally at: SiteOne Landscape Supplies.