

**Subject: Pruning Palm Trees**

Approved: Patrick Bohlen

PROCEDURE: **Pruning – Palm Trees**

INTENDED AUDIENCE: LNR Tree Team and contractors.

PURPOSE: To train LNR personnel and contractors on proper and acceptable palm tree pruning.

**I. Knowledge –**

Operators should have a working knowledge of the following information: Palm tree species used on campus, diseases associated with palm tree and proper palm tree pruning practices.

**Note:** Palm pruning will be performed based on methodologies and best management practices as recommended by the **American National Standards Institute (ANSI)**, the **International Society of Arboriculture (ISA)** and the **University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS)**

**Note:** Most palm tree fronds fall off naturally and do not require annual pruning. Over pruning palm trees can lead to nutritional issues, tapered growth, and disease infection. LNR does not recommend annual pruning of palms for aesthetic purposes but will prune palms on an as needed basis for lighting conflicts; palms that touch buildings and are causing pest issues; palm seed drop over walkways and entrances; and for various maintenance reasons such as painting, etc.

**CAUTION:** Use pruning hand tools only (loppers, tree saws, pruners etc.). Chainsaws are not to be used when pruning palm trees.

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**II. Proper Outcome –**

Pruning should promote plant health, encourage the growth and flowering aesthetics of the plant, and improve the appearance of the surrounding area.

**III. Safety –**

- a. Check for any biting or stinging insect that might be in area to be pruned. If wasp/ants are a problem let the supervisor know.
- b. Follow the safety requirements for hand tools - specifically hand pruners, loppers and pruning saw.
- c. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
  - i. Leather Gloves (recommended)
  - ii. Long Sleeve Shirt (recommended)
  - iii. LNR Issued Safety Shoes (required)

**IV. Palm Pruning Steps**

- a. Begin at the bottom of the foliage and look for fronds that are 75% dead, or broken fronds and spent flower branches.
- b. Using pruning gear, remove dead or broken fronds from the trunk cutting each frond at least two (2) inches from the trunk.
- c. Remove old desiccating, mature fronds located below the current year's growth.

**Note:** It is important to leave a minimum of two (2) rows of mature fronds.

**Note:** Climbing spikes are not to be used to access palm trees for pruning.

**CAUTION:** Never cut off the top or crown of the palm. The crown will not grow back and the tree will die.

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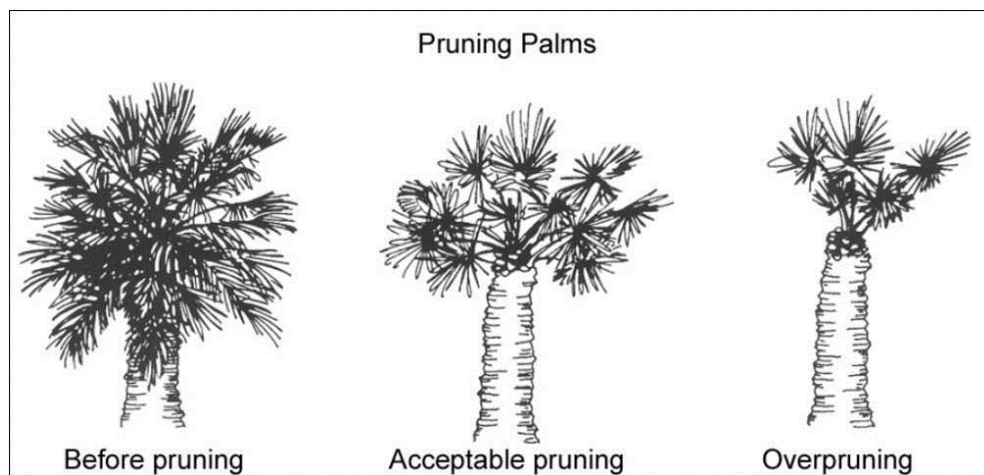
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d. Disinfect pruning hand tools in between palm trees by soaking tools for a minimum of five (5) minutes using one of the following disinfectants:

- I. Household bleach (Clorox) 25% solution (1 part bleach + 3 parts water)
- II. Pine Oil cleaner (Pine-Sol) 25% solution (1 part bleach + 3 parts water)
- III. Rubbing alcohol (70% isopropyl) 50% solution (1 part bleach + 3 parts water)

**Note:** Pruning green living fronds is prohibited. However, if pruning is necessary for safety reasons follow **step VI - e.**

e. Remove green fronds only if they hang at an angle below a line that is 90 degrees, or frond is parallel to the ground. Do not prune fronds that are above this horizontal line (see illustration).



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**Note:** Self-cleaning palms such as Royal of foxtail palms do not need to be pruned because fronds fall off naturally as they die. If pruning is necessary due to a safety hazard, trim dead or old fronds only.

- f. When pruning operations are complete, clean the cutting edges of the pruners, loppers or pruning saw with disinfectant to avoid transfer of disease, and secure for the next use.
- g. Police all trimmings and dispose of in the proper designated area.