

Common Tree and Palm Care Fails

Proper tree and palm care is essential to ensuring long-term survival, beauty and safety. However, poor pruning and landscaping practices can lead to a multitude of issues that ultimately result in tree and palm failure and costly removals and replacements.

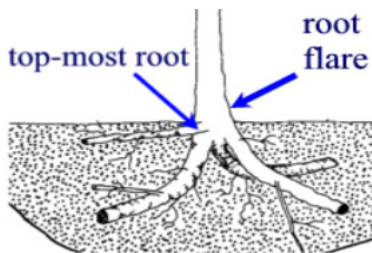
We can help.

Our “Neighborhood Best Practices” program provides tips and techniques on developing a tree care management plan, Florida-Friendly Landscaping™, protecting our local waterways and much more. Register online at tiny.cc/ufsaraext_nbp to make a difference in your neighborhood.

Avoid Common Mistakes

Planting too deep

Planting too deeply reduces air exchange between soil and air. The result can be roots starve for oxygen. It can also trap too much moisture in the root ball, resulting in root rot. Deep planting can lead to the root ball drying out during establishment. This occurs because the soil and mulch placed over the root ball holds some of the water preventing it from reaching the roots. Deep planting also can encourage development of stem-girdling roots which can prevent water and nutrient uptake and kill trees (See: hort.ifas.ufl.edu/woody/stem-girdling-roots.shtml).



Top-most roots should be near the surface. Locate the root flare. It is best when the root flare (root crown, trunk flare) is visible at the surface. The place where the top-most root originates from the trunk will be just below this point.

Source: hort.ifas.ufl.edu/woody/bare-root-detail.shtml

Failure to remove containers and supports



Synthetic burlap does not decompose in soils. All synthetic material should be removed from the root ball prior to palm or tree installation. Failure to do so can result in girdling of the roots and ultimate failure of the tree.

Supports should be removed within one year of planting to avoid damage to trunk.

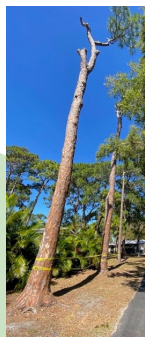
Circling roots will eventually girdle and kill tree.

Sources: blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/putnamco/2021/12/06/root-pruning-for-a-healthier-tree/, and hort.ifas.ufl.edu/woody/stake-management.shtml



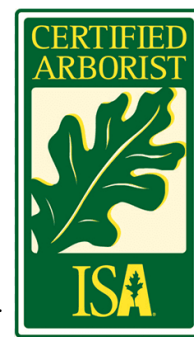
Tree support and trunk damage.

Hat-Racking and Topping



Hat-racking, topping, or stub cutting is the indiscriminate removal of branches resulting in decay, rot, unsightliness and risk of failure.

Hire an International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist to ensure proper pruning of your trees. To search for a Certified Arborist near your location, visit treesaregood.org/findanarborist/findanarborist.



Common Tree and Palm Care Fails

(cont'd)

Avoid Common Mistakes (cont'd)

Hurricane Cut



Unfortunately, it seems HOAs and homeowners are often solicited prior to hurricane season by false urgency to trim palms under the guise of storm safety. Over-pruning palms actually puts them at further risk during storm season and can result in ultimate failure of the palm and costly replacements.

Green fronds help palms obtain the nutrients they need to survive and protect their spear or main growth point during high wind events. Removing green fronds puts palms at risk and unnecessary costs to HOAs and homeowners.



Mechanical Damage



Trunk and root injuries can result from string trimmers damaging bark and lawn mowers running over exposed roots. To avoid mowing too close to trunks and roots, consider using mulch or plants.

Volcano Mulching

Never pile mulch against the trunk of a tree or palm. It can suffocate roots, trap moisture near the trunk, cause rot and prevent moisture from reaching tree or palm roots.

Lay mulch 8-12 inches from the trunk and move toward the drip line or beyond. Maintain a 2- to 3-inch layer of mulch.



Volcano mulching. Don't do this!

Root Barriers

For trees that have been installed too close to infrastructure and are at risk of creating damage, such as lifting sidewalks with their roots, contact a Certified Arborist to explore options for installing root barriers.

Learn more "Neighborhood Best Practices"

- Register here: tiny.cc/ufsaraext_nbp
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- Find more information at our websites: sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/sarasota and scgov.net/extension



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