

Healthy Palm Pointers from the University of Florida

To get maximum palm growth do not remove any green or partially green palm fronds when pruning a palm. University of Florida Cooperative Extension research shows that pruning green or yellowing fronds is harmful to the palm. Excessive pruning of green fronds stresses the palm and gradually reduces its trunk diameter. Only prune off totally brown fronds, this will keep the palm growing steadily. Fertilize your entire landscape every three months including your palms with 8-2-12 +4Mg with micronutrients. This fertilizer formula developed by UF contains nearly 100% slow release macronutrients and all the micronutrients in quick release form. This not only simplifies fertilization by having to use only a single product, but eliminates a serious problem encountered when high nitrogen turf fertilizers are applied to turf areas with palms growing nearby. Roots of large palms typically extend 50 feet or more from the trunk in all directions and will take up whatever fertilizers have been applied to the turf grass. Recent research indicates the high N:K ratio and lack of any Mg in most turf fertilizers have been known to kill palms from induced potassium deficiency. Concentrating fertilizer in holes, as spikes or in bands around palm trunks is less effective than spreading the same amount of fertilizer uniformly throughout the area under the palm canopy. For more palm care pointers pickup University of Florida publication 'Fertilization of Field-Grown and Landscape Palms in Florida' M-F, 9-4 at the Palm Beach County Cooperative Extension Service, 531 North Military Trail, West Palm Beach. Or call the Master Gardener Volunteers at 233-1750.



Figure 1 Sabal Palm only remove totally brown palm fronds. Note: the healthy palm on the left has a 360 degree canopy of green palm fronds