



## FYN Garden Q & A Series

**Thomas Becker**  
Extension Agent, Florida  
Yards & Neighborhoods



### FYN Topic: Over-Pruning Palms for Hurricane Season

**Question:** My neighbor paid someone to prune her palms and only a few leaves remain sprouting from the top. The landscaper called it a “hurricane cut” but it looks like it might be over-pruned. What is the proper way to prune a palm? C.D.

**Answer:** Hurricane season is a perfect time for palm pruning but only if done correctly. A palm left with a Mohawk cut is not acceptable pruning at any time of the year. But, removing only completely brown and dead fronds is good hurricane cuts.

Here’s how to know if it is done correctly! First, palms correctly pruned may appear to have brown leaves with visible green. Second, fronds remaining after pruning will fill the top of a clock face above the nine and the three positions. Remove no fronds attached to the trunk above these positions. Why? Experts agree that any green or partially green leaves on a palm supply food for the proper growth and health of emerging new leaves.

Palms pruned correctly have less need for fertilizer, pest control and do not need pruned more often than once per year. Only healthy palms survive repeated wind and storm damage like what occurred in 2005. If any green frond needs to be removed, for example hanging over your roof line, be sure not to cut into the bud area. Read more at:

<http://hort.ufl.edu/woody/documents/palms.pdf>

### Useful Links

<http://www.floridayards.org>

<http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>

<http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>

<http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu>



Over-Pruned Sabal Palms (Photo Tom Becker)

Thomas Becker is an extension agent for the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FYN) program at the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the Horticulture Help Desk at 239-533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. or by emailing [Extgardener@leegov.com](mailto:Extgardener@leegov.com). Visit his Web page at <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>

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