



## FYN Garden Q & A Series

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### FYN Topic: Palmetto Weevil

**Question:** I recently lost a large Canary Island date palm. When removing the tree, we found hundreds of larvae and mature red & black palm weevils. I live in Lehigh on the north and west side. I have seen other Canary Island palms in Lehigh die with similar symptoms. healthy fronds break, new growth is stunted and creates debris that looks like nesting material. The palms die in just a matter of 2-3 months. There were no weevils evident until I cut it down. Holes had been bored into the trunk on the inside.  
Rosie S. via email

**Answer:** The Palmetto Weevil (*Rhynchophorus cruentatus*) is a very destructive, one-inch long beetle. The adult weevil's coloration varies from mostly red to all black. This insect prefers feeding in landscape palms, especially the Canary Island Date palm and other date palms, Cabbage Palmetto and Saw Palmettos. Attacking a Canary Island palm, the insect causes the older fronds to droop and collapse followed by the top plopping over. Less frequently affected palms include the Bismarck, Caryota, Coconut, Royal, Latania and Washingtonia Palm. The palmetto weevil adult, grub or pupa are all hard to detect. The larvae feed inside a bored out hole at the base or boot of a palm frond. They eventually reach the heart or bud of the palm tree. Treatment is often futile and at best expensive. The best recourse for an infected tree is cutting it down and destroy all parts before the adult weevil emerges. To learn more, go to: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IN139>. The debris you see dropping from the palm is actually the normal sisal-like, palm trunk fibers coming from dying leaves.



Larvae



Adult Female



Canary Island Date Palm

### 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>

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 533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4:00 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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