



## Topic: Trunk of Coconut Palms Shows History

**Question:** Please see the attached photos of coconut palms. The most severely rotted areas and splits may have been from injury during planting several years ago. Do you have any other explanation for the split and trunk rot? Also, when is the best time to prune coconut palms to protect the public from fallen nuts?

- Roger, Fort Myers

**Answer:** The small vertical cracks in the trunks of virtually all palms are simply due to the expansion of the trunk during growth. More extensive vertical cracks arise from excessive uptake of water. The wide gash in one of the photo looks to be mechanical in nature and probably resulted from rough handling during digging and installation. Coconut palms produce inflorescences all year which lead to nut development. The inflorescences and nuts can be removed at any time without hurting the health of the palms.



### Useful Links

[Cabbage Palm Fact Sheet](#)

[Cabbage Palm Pictorial](#)

[Nutrition and Fertilization of Palms](#)

[Stephen's Webpage](#)

Stephen Brown is a horticulture agent with the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the horticulture desk at 533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. or by e-mailing [brownsh@leegov.com](mailto:brownsh@leegov.com). Visit his Web page at <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/hort/GardenHome.shtml>. For native plants click on Publications A-Z.

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