



Topic: PVC Pipe No Harm to Foxtail Palm

Question:

I own a home in Lee County and have a neighbor who is pushing me to plant a foxtail palm directly over this sewer pipe and I am reluctant to do so. Since I am not a native Floridian, and am not really familiar with palm roots, I really need an answer. Will the root ball of a foxtail palm, when it reaches maturity of about 30 foot tall, engulf and break a PVC sewer pipe that runs about 30 inches below ground directly below it? I have searched for several hours online without being able to find a definitive answer. I would really appreciate your help.

— Linda, email

Answer: At 30 inches deep, there will be no problem regarding the buried PVC pipe. This depth of burial occurs all the time with no consequence to the palm or the pipe. Palm roots emerge from the trunk at maximum thickness, probably not much thicker than most persons' thumbs. Although they can branch, they are incapable of becoming larger. They also grow upward in the soil and do not disrupt hardscapes or things like lines and pipes underground as hardwood trees would.

Useful Links

[Root Initials 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. 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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