

Protect Florida's Vulnerable State Tree



The Sabal Palm  
Sabal Palmetto

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The Sabal Palm (Sabal Palmetto)

Consider the Facts of Harsh Pruning

1. **Cutting healthy green** fronds steals the palms' source of nutrients, permanently stunts growth, invites disease and reduces the palms' natural resilience to high winds.
2. **Cutting fronds** reduces valuable shade, increases ground water evaporation and creates a need for irrigation.
3. **Over-pruned palms** develop bottleneck trunks. In high winds and hurricanes this stressed and weakened point will cause the palm to break off and die.
4. **Pruning of protective green fronds** makes the palm's heart cold-sensitive and susceptible to winter frosts and freezes.
5. **Harsh pruning** causes native and migratory songbirds, woodpeckers, butterflies, honey bees, treefrogs, bats, anoles, squirrels, and other wildlife to lose valuable food, shelter and nesting area.
6. **Work boots with climbing spikes** incur wounds in the trunk, leaving the palm prone to disease.
7. **Sabal Palms** (commonly known as cabbage palms) are self-pruning palms, shedding dead fronds in high winds. They have survived droughts, fires and floods, enriched the soil and adapted to coastal and inland environments for thousands of years. Their spring flowers and winter berries are vitally important to the survival of migratory birds and Florida's indigenous wildlife species.



\*Acceptable Pruning    Harsh Pruning    Long Term Effects

\*Though not necessary, it is acceptable to prune brown and yellow fronds hanging below an imaginary horizon line. Pole pruners work best. Prune stems away from the trunk.

**Green fronds should not be pruned.**

#### You Can Make A Difference

1. Do not cut green fronds.
2. Say NO to landscapers who want to prune green fronds. Exclude annual harsh-pruning from your landscape contract.
3. Keep lawn mowers, weed eaters and chain saws away from the trunk. These wounds are permanent and allow disease to enter the palm.
4. Mulch around palms to conserve water and keep out weeds, eliminating the need for weed eaters.
5. Enjoy your landscape, add fallen fronds to your compost or brush pile for wildlife. Fronds make rich soil for use in garden beds!
6. Work together to save and protect our valuable Sabal Palm, an integral part of Florida's ecosystems.
7. Help spread the facts. Copy this information to help educate others!



No Harsh Pruning  
A harmful and unnecessary practice

Information gathered from:  
Bertrock's Guide To Landscape Palms Alan Meerow, 1992  
An Illustrated Guide to Pruning Delmar Publishers, 1997

The Sabal Palm A Native Monarch Barbara Oehlbeck, 1996  
Bernie Peterson “Rockledge Gardens palm expert”

And Supported by:

Brevard County Cooperative Extension Service (407) 633-1702

The Indian River Audubon Society (407) 452-3609

The Central Florida Palm and Cycad Society (407) 724-8417

The Florida Native Plant Society (727) 856-8202

[www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fnps/fnps.htm](http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fnps/fnps.htm)

The Marine Resources Council of East Florida (407) 504-4500



Brochure created by Amy Mosher and friends in an effort to save Florida’s natural landscape.