Q: I’ve noticed some trees and palms have been severely pruned. Is this to get them ready for hurricane season?

A: Unfortunately, these over-pruned palms have been given the name “hurricane cut.” This would lead one to believe that this is really for the plant’s benefit in case we are hit by a storm. However, the opposite is true.

For woody trees and palms, it’s important to have healthy trees because they will withstand wind damage better than stressed trees. Removing palm fronds that are not brown reduces the palm’s ability to provide itself the energy to remain strong.

Well pruned woody trees survive better than unpruned trees. Before you prune, however, know why you are pruning a branch and the proper way to prune that branch. Otherwise, you can do more damage than good.

For example, lion’s tailing is where inner branches are removed and the remaining foliage is concentrated on the tips of branches. Someone may misinterpret this as thinning when it is not and it actually makes that tree more susceptible to hurricane damage.

It is important to regularly prune your woody trees as they mature to create a sturdy, well-spaced framework of limbs that will provide good air flow when those hurricane-force winds arrive. Your tree will survive with less damage.


If you need to hire an expert to prune your trees, a good starting point is the International Society of Arborists website where they list those arborists in your area who receive annual recertification training in pruning, [http://www.isa-arbor.com/faca/findArborist.aspx](http://www.isa-arbor.com/faca/findArborist.aspx).

Research has been done to determine which trees and palms have the most wind resistance. Here are some that do well in our area: bald cypress, buttonwood, cocoplum, crape myrtle, dahoon holly, gumbo limbo, live oak, *Podocarpus*, scrub hickory, southern *Magnolia*, white stopper, areca palm, cabbage palm, Canary Island date palm, Chinese fan palm, pindo palm, and pygmy date palm.

If you are interested in more information on hurricane readiness, check out the “Set for Storm Season” lunchtime class series Wednesdays at Phillippi Estates Park, as well as at the Twin Lakes Park location listed below.

**Special Notice:**
June 15 is the deadline for applications for the 2012 Master Gardener Training Program which starts in September.

PLANTING GUIDE

Vegetables & Herbs: (plant herbs from transplants and vegetables from seeds or transplants):
Basil, borage, catnip, collard and mustard greens, eggplant, lemon balm, marjoram, mint, okra, oregano, rosemary, southern peas, summer savory, sweet potatoes, thyme and turnip.

Annuals: Begonia Celosia, Coleus, Crossandra, Gazania, Gerbera daisy, Gomphrena, marigold, Melampodium, Nicotiana, periwinkle, Portulaca, Salvia, Torenia, and Zinnia.

Perennials: Blue daze, Gaillardia, Coreopsis, daylily, Pentas, Ruellia caroliensis (native), Salvia, Shasta daisy, society garlic, Stokes aster and Verbena.

Fruits in season: Banana, blueberry, Carambola, guava, citrus (calamondin, key lime, lemon and lime), Jackfruit, fig, kumquat, lychee, macadamia, mango, papaya and pineapple.

Blooming plants: African tulip tree, Allamanda, beautyberry, bird of paradise, Canna, crape jasmine, crape myrtle, dwarf Poinciana, Gardenia, Gloriosa lily, Jerusalem thorn, Ligustrum, Magnolia, Mexican flame vine, ponytail palm, Plumbago, Plumeria, royal Poinciana, thryallis, and Yucca.

Upcoming educational classes:
Call 861-5000 or register on-line at http://sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu/ for the following classes:

- Set for Storm Season: Preparing Your Home and Family, Phillippi Estates Park, 1:00 p.m. June 6
- Poisonous Plants in the Home & Landscape, Twin Lakes Park, 10:00 a.m. June 13
- Organic Backyard Fruits-Part 1, Phillippi Estates Park, Noon June 13
- Rain Barrel Workshop, North Sarasota Library, 10:00 a.m. June 16
- Set for Storm Season: Preparing Your Home and Family, Twin Lakes Park, 9:00 a.m. June 20
- Set for Storm Season: Protecting Your Homestead from Wildlife Risk, Twin Lakes Park, 10:30 a.m. June 20
- Set for Storm Season: Caring for Storm-damaged Plants, Phillippi Estates Park, Noon June 20
- Composting 101, Twin Lakes Park, 1:00 p.m. June 20
- Set for Storm Season: Caring for Storm-damaged Plants, Phillippi Estates Park, Noon June 21
- Why Landscapes Fail, Twin Lakes Park, 10:00 a.m. June 27
- Organic Backyard Fruits-Part 2, Phillippi Estates Park, Noon June 27

GETTING HELP
The Master Gardener Help Desk at Twin Lakes Park is available to answer your questions. Call 861-9807 or email at mghelpdesk@scgov.net. Walk-ins are welcome Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., closed from noon to 1 p.m.

Satellite Help Desks are available at these locations throughout Sarasota County: weekly at four South County libraries, every first and third Monday at Gulf Gate Library, every fourth Saturday
at Fruitville Library, every Wednesday at Phillippi Farmhouse Market, and every third Saturday at the Sarasota Farmers’ Market.

(Patricia Porchey is an Urban Horticulture Agent with University of Florida/IFAS Sarasota County Extension. Website: http://sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu)