

Seminars teach the public and professionals about palms

Palms seem to be gaining in popularity in North Florida landscapes. But not all palms will survive the Northwest Florida growing conditions. And even when suitable palms are selected, they can fail as a result of being planted too deep, fertilized incorrectly or due to an array of pests.

Palms suitable for North Florida must be able to withstand at least intermittent periods of below freezing temperatures. Within months to several years of being planted, many palms will die as a result of being planted too deep. Many palms become eyesores in the landscape as a result of incorrect fertilization resulting in nutrient deficiencies, discolored leaves and in some cases dead palms. These are common problems that can be avoided by getting the right information before you plant.

If you want to know how to select palms appropriate for our area and how to keep your palms healthy, consider attending one of two seminars offered by the UF/IFAS Santa Rosa County and Okaloosa County Extension Service. The title for both seminars is **When Palm Care is in Your Hands**. But the homeowner version will be offered Thursday, February 28 and the Green Industry Professional version will be offered Friday, February 29.

The February 28 seminar (geared toward homeowners) will be offered from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Community Life Center, 4115 Soundside Drive in Gulf Breeze. The Community Life Center is a large building located between Gulf Breeze and Navarre just east of the intersection of Garcon Point Bridge and Highway 98.

To register for the February 28th seminar, call the Santa Rosa County Extension Office at 850-623-3868 or the Okaloosa County Extension Office at 689-5850 or 729-1400 ext.5850. The cost to attend is \$5. Space is limited.

The February 29 seminar (geared toward Green Industry Professionals) will be offered from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Okaloosa County Extension Annex, 127 West Hollywood Blvd. in Fort Walton Beach.

The February 29th seminar will include outdoor demonstrations on transporting, installing, pruning and banding palms. Continuing Education Units will also be provided for attendees with pesticide licenses.

To register for the February 29th seminar, call 689-5850 or 729-1400 ext.5850. The cost to attend is \$30. Space is limited.

Both seminars will include presentations on palm species recommended for Northwest Florida. Both seminars will feature Dr. Monica Elliott, University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Plant Pathologist. Dr. Elliott has been involved with palm disease research at the UF/IFAS Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center since 1987. Elliott will cover how to fertilize and maintain your palms, which insects and diseases may affect your palms and other interesting facts.

Larry Williams, UF/IFAS Extension Agent, Okaloosa County, February 12, 2008