

## **PLANTING A CONTAINER-GROWN PALM**

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As palms are very different from woody plants, their proper planting also has some notable differences that can result in a successful transplanting experience. While huge palms require heavy equipment and sufficient labor, smaller container palms, as might be available at local garden centers, are commonly purchased and planted by homeowners. These palms require proper planting and aftercare to support the best growth.

Palm roots are so different from woody plant roots. For instance, there is no need to cut and correct the circling roots found in containerized palms as it would be with a tree or shrub. Palm roots develop and grow from the base of the trunk in an area called the root-initiation zone. New roots will develop from this zone and eventually replace all of the original roots. Palms roots also stay the same diameter throughout their life. Woody plant roots increase in diameter over time.

Prepare your planting hole twice the size of the original container. In some potted palms you will notice that the soil level has settled exposing the area where the roots and the trunk come together. Carefully place the palm root ball so that the root-shoot interface (the root-initiation zone) is about one-inch below the soil surface. This root-shoot interface area is the spot where the trunk base and the roots meet. If the palm is not properly planted, it could fall over in the future because of lack of anchorage. You may sometimes notice palms in the landscape that were planted too shallow. Such palms will benefit from mounding some soil up around the root initiation area. This will allow new roots to develop and stabilize the palm.

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Proper fertilization is critical to help properly establish your container grown palm. Using a palm special type fertilizer - typically an 8-2-12-4Mg plus micronutrients - apply as recommended on the label. Top-dress the fertilizer as per label directions over the root ball and out about 12 inches beyond the edge of the root ball. This will supply the nitrogen needs of the establishing palm. Without this fertilizer to promote establishment, the palm will be held back and will show nutrient deficiencies. Water is also very important and palms will require irrigation for six to eight months depending on the size of the palm and weather conditions. Keeping watering re-

strictions and rain events in mind, hand water ever other day as needed.

Palms are an important part of our landscapes and will do best when properly planted and established. A rapidly growing, healthy palm will be better apt to survive typical weather, disease and insect challenges.

*Resources:*

- Broschat, T.K. (2009) *Transplanting Palms in the Landscape*. UF/IFAS Extension Service.

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*For more information about our Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Program, please contact our FYN Horticulture Program Assistant Allison Turner at 764.4351 or email [Allison.Turner@CharlotteFL.com](mailto:Allison.Turner@CharlotteFL.com).*

*Allison can help educate you about the FYN Program so you can create a beautiful, Florida-Friendly landscape that saves you time and money while conserving precious water resources and reducing pollution.*

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You can also visit them at one of our many  
Plant Clinics around the county:  
<http://charlotte.ifas.ufl.edu/PlantClinics.pdf>



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